

THE BENNET FAMILY

by

Mintie Allen Royse



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The letters, documents, pamphlets, and clippings used by the author in preparing the story of the Bennet family have been deposited in the Archives of De Pauw University and Indiana Methodism, Greencastle, Indiana.

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BETHANIA CROCKER BISHOP BENNET

PREFACE

FROM SCATTERED LETTERS and diaries and from the legends and traditions of the Bennets which formed my youthful background, I wrote the story of that family. Except for the account of my grandfather's last journey, his death, and the subsequent disposal of his means, the story is fairly well documented. I have tried to indicate which of the episodes or details are based only on word-of-mouth stories.

The account was written about twenty years ago, and intended only for my family's perusal. Upon reading it recently I felt that the story related here might be of wider interest. Joseph Bennet, my grandfather, must have been a most charming and disarming personality, and the account of his coming to America and establishing himself here is a tale of adventure and courage well worth the telling. But even more, I realized that the story of Bethania Bennet was not merely that of my grandmother, but that of a really extraordinary woman, brave, sensitive, forward looking, skilled, and dedicated. She saw the necessity of making available to the young women in the Midwest opportunity for education and training which would make them fit companions for the young men graduating from the newly established colleges for men—Miami, Hanover, Wabash, Indiana Asbury; but she saw something more important: the necessity of giving to young women the education and training which would make them more interesting companions to themselves. To Bethania Bennet I think should be attributed a fair share of the responsibility for opening to young girls of the Midwest the doors of learning.

And therefore I am glad to share the story of Joseph and Bethania Bennet with a wider circle of readers than that of their descendants alone.

January 1958

MINTIE ALLEN ROYSE

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Bethania Bennet and Joseph Bennet.....*facing page 49*

Henry Lindsay and Cousin Mary Rolfe

Lindsay*facing page 79*

I

JOSEPH BENNET'S STORY

WHEN JOSEPH BENNET, my grandfather, set sail from England for America in the late spring of 1837, it was not as a young adventurer in search of his fortune that he came. Far from it. He was a mature man of thirty-seven who knew what he wanted from his world, and how to get it. He knew how to get on with his superiors and with his inferiors, with men and with women; he knew how to choose friends and how to bind them to him; how to bear grief and how to attain happiness. He loved life and all life brought him, and life had presented to him a goodly round of challenges before his thirty-seventh birthday.

An entry in an old Bible belonging to his father states that he was the son of Mary and Thomas Bennet, and was born November 29, 1800, in Braintree, England. It is well to cling to that date; it is the only definite information I have of him until seventeen years had passed. Years later, in a letter to my grandmother, he himself takes up the story of his life at this point. "Deprived of all my property," he writes, "by the insolvency of my guardian before I was seventeen, and, consequently launched early in life, in the wide world without money or friends, and at the age of twenty-one, [I was] undertaking the somewhat bold attempt of elbowing my way alone, and friendless, against a dense population of two millions in the great city [London] to attain the same station in society from which misfortune had displaced me."

Who that guardian was, and by what means Joseph Bennet attained "the same station in society from which misfortune had displaced" him, I have never known, nor exactly what that station was. It was comfortable middle-class English life, I take it, with plenty of good food, certain domestic comforts and elegancies, a social life confined largely to the

circle of the Baptist congregation in Sussex, and a good secondary education. The technical training for the trade which he was soon to follow was probably gained as an apprentice, after the loss of his patrimony, but the foundations for his skillful, even elegant writing, his appreciation of letters, his avid intellectual curiosity, must have been laid long before that time by a good secondary education and a home life in which there was considerable culture and some elegance. I know almost nothing of the four years between the loss of his fortune and his twenty-first year when, as he writes, he "undertook the somewhat bold attempt of elbowing his way, alone and friendless, in the great city . . ." He was not entirely alone, for his mother lived with him from the time of the family debacle to the day of his death, and was to her son both asset and liability—even as you and I. I fancy the years between 1817 and 1821 were spent as an apprentice learning the delicate art of watchmaking and repair. I rather doubt his "elbowing his way." He had great charm, easy manners, a quick intelligence, and an eager interest in all that came his way. These qualities probably did his "elbowing" for him. Nor do I believe he was long "without friends"—if he ever was.

Somewhere back in those early years he had, as friends and neighbors, the Challis children. The boys, James and Ebenezer, were his schoolmates. Martha, a shy and quiet little girl was, as he wrote of her years after, "my dearest friend, and the friend of my youth." The Challis brothers, during the years in which Joseph Bennet rose to become the senior partner of Bennet, Wing & Co., Watchmakers and Silversmiths, attained professorships of astronomy at Cambridge University, and Martha became Joseph Bennet's wife and the mother of his three oldest little girls. When their marriage took place, what was the state of the Bennet fortunes, or when the delicate little Martha died, I am not certain. The eldest of the little daughters, named Martha, was born in 1827; the youngest, Mary, in 1833. Sarah was born some-

where between these dates, and there were two others, "born prematurely," the record says.

During the years between his twenty-first birthday and the day his frail young wife died, Joseph Bennet's life was more than full. His business, his mother, his family—all dependent upon him—made diligence in business a prime necessity. A contemporary says of him, "I can testify that his conduct to his friends and family has been kind and considerate; that his integrity and diligence in his vocation earned for him the success they merited. That he gained respect and influence in the society in which he moved." All in all, that took some doing, taking into account his mother, the frail wife, and the rapidly accumulating babies.

It was during this period that he became an active member in the Henrietta Street Baptist Church in London, where later he was to become a deacon. He sorely needed the consolations of religion, and I have always been glad to know that any service he may have rendered to his church was repaid a thousand fold by the help, and comfort, and courage he derived from the spirit of his faith. It is difficult for me, living in an unreligious and scientific age, to realize and appreciate the importance in the life of my forebears of their religious belief and of the theology which was the basis for belief. Their daily walk was with God; their most important duty, to submit to His will; their constant effort, to learn what that will required of them; their customary intellectual exercise, the elaboration and exposition of the theological implications of their faith.

When his young wife died, after long illness, Joseph Bennet found the only ease for his grief in a long and detailed account of her decline and death in terms of religious faith. This was God's will, Joseph Bennet believed, decreed mysteriously for his ultimate good and for the release of poor little Martha's soul from an ailing body. Had he suspected that this poor little tuberculous body was entirely unequal to the strain put upon it by almost continuous childbearing, he

would himself have died, of a grief and remorse for which his affectionate and tender soul could have found no comfort.

The dominant traits in Joseph Bennet's character, showing plainly in these early records and becoming increasingly evident with added knowledge of his way of life, were this strong religious faith, a lively interest in liberal political ideas, and a zest and enthusiasm for life and all that it offered. He was interested in almost everything. He loved argument and discussion, had no prejudice against change, and would hopefully try almost anything once or twice. At the table spread before him by his God, very often in the presence of his enemies, he ate heartily and feared no evil, although the fare was often strange and bitter.

By his thirty-third year he had had a surprising number of elemental experiences. He had been catapulted out of a secure position in life by the loss of his inheritance; he had equipped himself for getting a new foothold in the world, and had made his footing there secure; he had published a pamphlet on his discovery of a new alloy and its value to the watchmaker's art; and he had invented a keyless watch. He had provided a home for his mother, had married, had fathered three daughters, and had gone down to the Valley of the Shadow with their mother. Here was a lifetime of experience, but only the beginning of life for Joseph Bennet. There was much still to be seen and savored! Years later, in a letter to my grandmother, he put into one of his telling phrases the entire situation. "Having the care," he writes, "of a rising family, severe domestic trials, impaired health and, ultimately, an extensive and engrossing business, I have had but few opportunities of gratifying my taste for literature or science." There stands the man! The world was his oyster if he could but find time and opportunity to open it!

By 1837, when the "extensive and engrossing business" had become the firm of "Bennet, Wing & Co., Watchmakers & Silversmiths, Red Lion Street, Holborn, London," the list of customers included the name of Lord Brougham, the Duke of

Sussex, and other members of the court. Flourishing as was his business, however, Joseph Bennet's domestic situation was deplorable. "A rising family and severe domestic afflictions" was but a pale reference to the factors of his emotional life from the time of his early marriage to Martha Challis to her long decline and her death. Here was a continuing violent emotional experience which might easily have devastated many a man, leaving him stunned and broken. But Joseph Bennet was made of sterner stuff. With Martha's death, a chapter in his life was closed, to be sure, but life had other chapters to be read and learned, enjoyed even, and his vigorous and eager spirit went about its business.

In 1834, approximately a year after the death of his first wife, he married a gently bred young woman of whom I know little save that her name was Elizabeth Weare, that by February, 1836, she had borne Joseph Bennet two daughters, Elizabeth and Frances (Fannie), and that she was in such frail health that her husband and her physician both feared that she was developing the tuberculosis that had carried off her predecessor. The physician said she must get out of the smoke and fog of London. Joseph Bennet decided he would take her, not only out of London, but entirely out of England, and this decision, taken in 1836 and carried into action in the late spring of the following year, brings us to the pivotal date of this story.

Among Joseph Bennet's papers there is a little pocket memorandum book for 1836, filled with miscellaneous entries in his neat script listing debts owed and bills collected; items concerning sales for Bennet, Wing & Co.; a record of the birth of "little Fannie," his fifth daughter; a reminder to "call upon Mr. Scott"; but these entries were interspersed with frequent notes concerning books on America, maps of the Ohio River Company, "Information Concerning Kentucky," all showing an increasing interest in a new field for his activities. He must have talked over the question of a move rather freely with his business partner, with whom he had

long discussed his ideas of politics and society, for William Wing was surprised only at the apparent suddenness of his decision. "Though I knew you had a great partiality for the far West," Wing writes, "I did not imagine you would so early have fixed upon it as your residence."

Early in 1837 he had quite made up his mind; his face was definitely turned toward America. He was certain that his ailing wife had only to arrive in America to improve at once, and was heart and soul given over to preparations for his new life. First, he sold his share in the business of Bennet, Wing & Co. The contract, drawn up in longhand by William Wing, and signed decorously by both partners in the beautiful script of the day, survives to this day. But there was more to the proposed move than the business settlement. Joseph must have help in transferring his family to the new home, and for this help he looked to a member of his household who had never failed him yet.

Mary Anne Rolfe she was, a capable, matter-of-fact, efficient young woman of twenty-eight or so, his cousin and an ever-present help in time of trouble. She had been a part of the Bennet family for years, probably from the day the second little daughter had pushed the first one off of her frail mother's lap. Each year had made her more necessary to the happiness and well being of the Bennet household; each year knit her life more closely to theirs. She had never asked what her status was to be in that home, nor what was to be her reward, nor her future; it was sufficient that she was their kinswoman, unattached and capable, and they needed her. She had stepped into the family breach and had become, like many another unmarried woman in like circumstances in those days, second in command in a family emergency so long as she was needed. Joseph Bennet knew that in the proposed exodus from London, Cousin Mary Anne Rolfe was definitely the *sine qua non*. Without her assistance the project simply could not go on. The first step, then, was to persuade Cousin Mary

to stay on with the family and see to it that all the preparations were made. He knew he could not do without her.

So far as Mary Anne, herself, was concerned, no great persuasion was necessary. She liked her cousin and was grateful for previous benefits conferred; she was fond of the frail young wife, and she adored the little girls. She enjoyed turning off all the work she did so well, and loved the feeling of being needed and of being equal to the emergency. Here with the Bennets was her work, and a change from its accustomed locale to a new and uncharted one was only an added reason for holding on to it. Like her cousin Joseph, she loved new scenes and untasted experiences, and she was more than glad to undertake the adventure, providing her parents gave their consent. Gaining that was none too easy. Poor Aunt Rolfe was torn by many emotions. She feared the sea and all its works, and her reiterated wail, "I am so fearful of the water!" must have been hard for Joseph Bennet to bear. His generous promise to send for her and her husband to join Mary Anne eventually, only made matters worse, since to take advantage of that offer meant the sea and all its terrors for them. On the other hand, she knew Mary Anne wanted to go. She hated to put anything in the way of Mary Anne's future, and she did not wish to seem ungrateful for Joseph Bennet's generosity, past and future. Moreover, this move would probably break up the understanding between Mary Anne and a lover of whom she had never approved. And so, at last, she gave her consent, and I wish that the patience of my readers was equal to the perusal of the letter announcing her decision.

Aunt Rolfe's reluctant consent once granted, the worst was over for Joseph Bennet. Mary Anne probably saw to most of the practical details of any matter in which she was concerned. I have no record of that, however, or of the melancholy business of breaking up a home and saying good-by to old friends, or of the wild excitement of the five little girls, or the gloom cast by Joseph's mother upon the entire proceedings. But any-

one who has gotten off with even two children for a mere summer vacation, or who has moved from one house to another, albeit on the same street, can guess what those final weeks in England must have been for Pa Bennet and Mary Anne.

I have only a portion of the diary which Joseph Bennet kept of that leave taking and the journey to America. I remember reading in another journal an entry which listed what went into the green chest (food stuff, if I remember correctly, to augment the rather meager provisions of the passenger ship of 1837), and what went into the leather trunk, and the portmanteau, and the carpetbag, and where were packed the medicines and the children's extra shoes, and Madame's velvet bonnet and her silver coffee pot.

The diary I have at hand has to do with the actual account of the voyage itself, in its masculine aspects—how long it took, how seasick they were, what their accommodations were like, the kind of people they had on board, what things cost. That is what I have in writing, but of the real, but unrecorded, details of that trip I know more than Pa Bennet himself, for, years later, Cousin Mary told me about it, times without number. She knew all the news behind the news; what you did when three little girls were seasick at the same moment and you, yourself, felt queer; how to make comfortable the ailing mother during the worst of the storm; what you said to Madame when she disapproved utterly of three girls who went to the cook's galley to dry out their damp clothes, and what you did to keep her from knowing that during the entire voyage the silver coffee pot was missing. Nobody but Mary Anne could have found and claimed it in the mad hurly-burly of debarkation, or, if he had, no one could have refrained from telling about it after it was all over—nobody but Mary Anne.

And so, on a windy, sunny May morning in 1837 Joseph Bennet, at the head of a family looking strangely like a harem, set out for America. There were nine of them; Joseph Bennet, himself, and his mother; his wife, too frail and sick to care whether she went or stayed; Cousin Mary and the five little

girls, all *qui vive*, consumed with curiosity and interested in every detail of their new home and the way thither. My heart sinks at the thought of all the hand baggage Joseph must have had on his mind—for “Mrs. Bennet, poor dear,” and Grandmother, and the little girls, and the extra food to supplement the dull and meager diet offered by the *President* to her passengers.

Friends and family had come to see them off, and brought other parcels! James and Ebenezer Challis, with gifts for their little nieces; William Wing and other business friends to wish Joseph Bennet well on his new venture; Aunt and Uncle Rolfe to bid Mary Anne good-by and to register anew their terror of the deep. Last, but far from least, there was Henry Lindsay, Cousin Mary’s devoted lover, lingering in dumb misery long after all were aboard and the *President* well under way. As an apprentice to Bennet, Wing & Co., Henry Lindsay had met Cousin Mary in Joseph Bennet’s home and had immediately fallen victim to her charm and good humor. He had little to offer her at that time—or ever—save the affectionate devotion and the warm and understanding love which wrapped her round all the days of her life. But Mary Anne had accepted his devotion and enjoyed his society, adding as it did a pleasant masculine tang which gave zest to a life heretofore almost completely feminine in flavor. The elder Rolfes looked upon their daughter’s suitor with little favor, feeling that she could do much better for herself than a watch-maker’s apprentice, and one reason for giving their consent to Mary Anne’s trip to America was the hope that there she might change her mind about the understanding with Henry. But Mary Anne’s was not a nature to chop and change. Having arrived at an understanding with Henry that at some indefinite future date they should be married, the matter was settled so far as she was concerned. She was promised to Henry, but at this moment of embarkation she could pay him small mind, taken up as she was with the five little girls and their sick mother and all the accoutrements of the journey.

In the reminiscences of her later years, Cousin Mary confessed that as she watched Henry Lindsay's dwindling figure on the receding pier and gazed until his fluttering handkerchief finally faded from her sight, she never expected to see him again. Apparently she did not know Henry's staying qualities!

Soon after the ship left the dock, "all bustle and confusion," the little diary records they went below, "it being so wet and windy that no one could stay on deck." I was interested to learn not long ago, that the *President* was a sister ship to the *Constitution* and as comfortable as any of the day, but so lacking in most of the conveniences supplied to the most economical modern traveler that I marvel anew at the endurance and stamina of those who went down to the sea in ships in that day. Entirely dependent as they were upon wind and weather, with ventilation limited, at best, and in time of storm practically nonexistent, with a food supply so inadequate that, as a matter of course, it was supplemented by the passengers, it is little wonder that Joseph Bennet records again and again, "all very ill and miserable."

I wish I knew just what and how much the Bennet family carried in the way of extra food. I can only surmise from an entry in the journal made on the third day out. The *President* had arrived off Portsmouth but was anchored ten miles out so that there was no chance to add to their supplies from that market the items forgotten in London. "However," Grandfather writes, "boats came alongside with bread & charged 1/ for a 6 lb. loaf." How many loaves or how good they were and how long they lasted, he does not say.

At last all preliminaries were over; they had taken on the captain and most of the cabin passengers at Portsmouth; they had had their last chance to buy supplies, and were now settled in their cabins and learning their way about the deck as well as the rough weather would permit. At long last, on the 11th, they passed Land's End and were really out at sea. In a characteristic entry of this date Joseph writes, "Took a last look at the shores of old England. No regret at doing so;

had no particular feeling on looking for the last time on my native country, except that I was glad to get away from it." It is plain that when Joseph Bennet closed a chapter, it was ended. His eyes were on the future, and he was on his way toward what that future held. He was, of course, still young; he was taking with him all those who were really important in his life; his native land had been the scene of a good deal of personal grief and disappointment, and in addition, the political and social atmosphere seemed none too congenial to the liberal ideas becoming more and more important to him. All this made it easy to leave a not-too-happy past for a beckoning future. But, even if circumstances had been different, I believe that any past, happy or painful, would have interested Joseph Bennet less than any future, however problematical. He loved life, and he loved to get on with it, so that even the rough and uncomfortable preface to the book of his new life was interesting to him. And it was rough and uncomfortable. The *President* had heavy going, and when, on the fourth night out, the sailors manned the bilge pumps, "Mrs. B. thought the ship had sprung a leak. I got up & went on deck to satisfy her," as many another considerate husband has sniffed for smoke and investigated strange noises for a nervous wife.

"A very bad night—did not go to bed. If we had we should hardly have been able to keep in—the straining and groaning of the ship—the pitching & rolling, the vociferation of the Capt, mates & crew, the roaring & howling of the wind, & striking of the ship, so that every timber trembled as if in terror, contributed to make this night never to be forgotten," he writes. The next day was no better, for a strong head wind drove them a hundred miles out of their course. He had a bad fall on deck, straining his back. "Was obliged to nail my stool to the floor & strap my body to the side of the cabin to sit at all, & when at tea [of course, there was tea] had to hold the teapot in one hand & drink my tea with the other." "Let the hurricane roar; business as usual," says my imperturbable grandsire.

The voyage wasn't all stormy, but in the main it was an extremely rough passage and full of discomforts. There was illness among the members of his party—everybody was seasick except Cousin Mary who had no time for such indulgence; torrential rains; icebergs in the offing; a smallpox scare and consequent delay in quarantine. Everything was meticulously recorded, as items in a report, good days and bad alike. Joseph Bennet never failed to record the sunshine, the moonlight nights, the sea birds which interested him greatly, a school of porpoises, a colorful sunset, an opalescent jelly fish hauled on deck. But in the main it was a difficult business and even Joseph Bennet's equanimity was disturbed enough for this entry: "At sea 3 weeks today, expect to be a fortnight longer, never advise any person to deceive themselves by going to sea for pleasure, for it is a monotonous, miserable life."

But all things come to an end, and on Sunday, June 11, the *President* dropped anchor off Staten Island. Of course, everyone was wild to get ashore. Madame Bennet wanted to get her feet on terra firma before the coffee pot was lost again. Cousin Mary, having packed the bags and washed and dressed the little girls, was anxious to make a landing before they were all dirty again. Pa Bennet, himself, and "Mrs. Bennet, poor dear," as Cousin Mary always called her, felt as if they could not bear another night on board. But they had to! No disembarkations were permitted before morning!

The entry in Joseph Bennet's journal for Monday, June 12, says, "Went on shore at 10 o'clock in search of a boarding house." Well, maybe! But if I know Grandfather, he spent some time sightseeing as well, and consequently "Had some difficulty getting back to Staten Island." That is what he wrote, but there was more to it than that, for here again Cousin Mary's supplementary comments make plain the news behind the news. He was gone all day until late that night, "unable to find transportation back to the ship from Staten Island," while his frantic family was unable to find out what had become of him or what was to become of them if, as they

were finally convinced, he had met with foul play. What were they to do, without money, without friends—for of course Grandpa had the money and the addresses in his wallet—when they were put ashore in a strange land? Only a woman who has worried over an unaccountably absent male knows the agonies of panic and rage endured by these eight women during the long hours of the afternoon and evening while they waited and wondered and worried about the absent Joseph Bennet. He needed all his charm that evening, for by the time he finally climbed over the side, conscience-smitten and contrite, they all hated him, and for probably the first time in his life, his return to the bosom of his family was greeted with cold glances and tears. All was soon forgiven after they learned of his difficulty in getting a boat for his return. Re-united, they summoned what courage they could to endure that night—and still another—on the *President* before they were released from quarantine and at last set free. On Wednesday, June 14, 1837, six weeks after leaving London, the monotony and discomfort of the long voyage was behind them, and Joseph and his entourage had their feet firmly on American soil.

The year 1837 was the heyday of the great Merchant Marine, and when the *President* docked at Peck's Slip she became a part of that great marine pageant, which in those days rimmed the southern and eastern edge of Manhattan. It must have been exciting to pass under the prows of all those ships, in from the seven seas, although six weeks aboard any ship would probably dull one's appetite for shipping. The Bennets, no doubt, did not tarry at the dock, but hailed two or three of the waiting cabs to take them and their mountain of luggage to the boardinghouse selected by Mr. Bennet two days before. Mr. Valecton's it was, at No. 3 Cherry Street, not far from the dock and a place of some distinction at that time. Here the weary family was left to rest after the ordeal of the past weeks, while Joseph set out, as was his custom, "for to admire and for to see." I fancy his womenfolk, remembering his

latest excursion, looked with some misgivings upon his departure. They knew his frame, however, and realized that it was not possible for him to settle down while there was a whole city to be explored, and so resigned themselves as gracefully as might be to resting while the head of the family took off the first edge of his appetite for the sights and sounds of the New World.

Mr. Valecton's boardinghouse is in a sad state today, a dank and decrepit brick building squatting forlornly under an arch of Brooklyn Bridge. Half of it has been cut away to make room for an abutment. Its descent in the world from its proud beginning has been a sad one, for originally, long before Mr. Valecton occupied it with his boardinghouse, No. 3 Cherry Street had been the first Executive Mansion of the United States, temporary, to be sure, and used for little more than a year, but well equipped and handsomely furnished. It was to this house that Washington came up from Mount Vernon in 1789, and from its dignified doorway he set out for his inauguration. In Joseph Bennet's day, after the lapse of fifty years, it was still dignified, if not imposing, and reminiscent of its tenant and the great men who had met there to discuss, with their chief, plans for the young Republic. Joseph was impressed by its atmosphere and believed it a good omen that his own new life in a free country should have its beginning here. I like to quote the entry in his diary for June 14, 1837: "Took up our abode with Mr. Valecton, Cherry St., corner Franklin Square, where Washington lived when first in N. Y. Sat at our meals every day in the same noble room where those great men, Washington, Franklin, Hancock, Adams sat deliberating in trembling anxiety over the fate of the young Republic."

He appreciated how great that anxiety must have been, but there was no anxiety in his own heart. He had left his old life with no regret and was now eagerly facing an unknown future. It was beginning well, with Mr. Valecton's boarding-

house to remind him anew of the free new world he was to live in.

Friends called upon him at once, and as soon as they had left, he set out to call upon several persons to whom he had letters of introduction. Making friends was one of Grandfather's major accomplishments and his journal records that on that first day he had been asked to dinner with "Fellowes Esq." where he met two other "delightful gentlemen who gave me letters of introduction to Mr. Lyon of Cincinnati."

It was a small New York that he explored, but it interested him enormously, with its handsome buildings, its busy streets, and the evidences of rapid expansion. He was told that the residential district stretched north as far as Washington Square, but he hadn't time to explore more than the business blocks and residences in the main part of the city. Two years before, large areas of the center of the city had been devastated by the great fire of 1835. The consequent rebuilding and the rearrangement of the streets gave the town an aspect of spring cleaning familiar to visitors from that day to this. Few other features of the city he saw would be familiar to us. City Hall then, as now, was a dominant feature, Trinity Church, St. Paul's, and Fraunces Tavern; but the handsome red brick houses facing the Bowling Green, the business houses and dwellings along lower Broadway, the great open wharves around the tip of the island which he saw are gone today.

I find it hard to realize how different was Joseph Bennet's world from mine—in extent, in ideals, in the foundations of its thought, in its material equipment, in its spiritual background. In the year he came to America, England came to the end of the Georgian era, and in the same month in which he began his new life here, Victoria was crowned Queen of an England rapidly changing from the one he had always known. His voyage was made in a sailing vessel, the first transatlantic steamers not being in commission until 1838. Once aboard the lugger, he and his contemporaries were completely out of communication with land. Morse's telegraph was not patented

until September and the transatlantic cable was, of course, still undreamed of. It was not until 1839 that Goodyear perfected the processing of the juice of a tropical plant into rubber, a substance which has practically revolutionized the technique of daily life since Joseph Bennet's day. It is hard to think how Grandfather brought up all those girls without rubber—bottle nipples, and dolls, and combs and side-combs, garters, overshoes and raincoats. I have spent interesting days prowling around old New York to see if I could, in imagination, see what Joseph Bennet saw. I followed, in reverse, as nearly as possible, his journey from New York into the new West which was to be his home. I tried to think his thoughts as his ardent spirit encountered new scenes and new experiences; but after all, it was a strange world and far removed and I am certain that try as I might, the world I saw was but a pale and distorted image of the world through which he passed so eagerly a hundred years ago.

After ten days of rest for his family and delighted sight-seeing on his own part, Joseph Bennet with his entourage "left New York, by railroad for Trenton, then by steamer to Bordentown and from there by steamer for Philadelphia." Don't forget that at every change from steamer to train, from train to steamer, Joseph Bennet must assemble and redistribute his mother, his wife, five little girls of assorted sizes, Mary Anne, his mother's silver coffee pot and best bonnet, the carpet bag, the portmanteau, and other small luggage. My heart sinks at the mere thought of it, but Joseph Bennet, with Mary Anne's assistance, took it in his stride and came up smiling to write, "the Delaware is a magnificent river—banks so lovely"; and when they arrived hot and tired at the United States Hotel in Philadelphia he forgot all his previous discomfort to record, "Had magnificent apartments here and first rate living, with a black servant constantly to attend us." In spite of his enjoyment of this luxury, he felt he had paid too dear for his whistle. A day and two nights, two suppers, two breakfasts and a dinner, plus sleeping quarters

and a black servant for four adults and five children had cost him \$28.00. Well, after all, Grandpa!

He loved Philadelphia! The fine hotels, the impressive U. S. Bank with its floor, counter and Doric pillars all of marble, the marble post office, the dignified, leisurely businessmen upon the street—all delighted him. I think he might have liked to settle down in Philadelphia. For one thing, it would have saved getting the family on the train again, no small consideration in my eyes. He had letters of introduction to several persons, the cashier of the United States Bank, among them. He opened an account there, whether as an anchor to windward or as a friendly gesture toward the cashier, I don't know. At any rate, he lost it in the failure of that bank in the first blast of the great panic of 1837.

Much as they liked Philadelphia, on a Sunday morning they were again on their way: by train to Harrisburg; by canal to Holiday'sburgh; by train over the Allegheny Mountains to Johnstown; by canal to Pittsburgh and thence down the Ohio to Cincinnati. I still can't believe it was humanly possible, but my precious journal states calmly, "arrived at Cincinnati at 10 o'clock on June 30. Slept on board and went ashore to Congress Hotel." Next day Joseph Bennet found a boardinghouse lest he might again be charged \$28.00 for two days' and nights' accommodation.

During the long progress over mountains and rivers, not one detail escaped him. He was interested in the lift over the mountains at the Holiday'sburgh; the big barns and the tiny houses of the Pennsylvania German farmers. He wrote enthusiastically of the "enchanted scenery along the Kenawha and the Juniata rivers"; he liked the welcome leisureliness of canal-boat travel. "We have nothing like them [the canal boats] in England," he wrote, "they are elegantly fitted up with bar, gentlemen's, ladies' cabins, libraries, and the sleeping accommodations are very good. There are 2 sorts [of canal boats], one for passengers, and one for freight, & another line for emigrants & those who prefer economy to comfort."

He has a good deal to say of his discomfort from the heat—June on a canal boat probably was uncomfortable enough.

Having reached Cincinnati, he lost no time in setting out to study the place and its people and its opportunities for business; his chances for making a home and a happy, healthy life for his family. His entries in the little gray book are happy. He loved Cincinnati, all but the unaccustomed heat; thought its location far more beautiful than he had anticipated; marveled at its rapid growth from a frontier town to a city of churches, schools, and handsome houses. He loved the people who were busy but most friendly. He records, in contradiction to the strictures of Mrs. Trollope and other travelers, "In all my journeyings, have seen none of the rudeness of Americans, nor the oddities you meet with in the works of professed tourists and bookmakers. I believe they are generally added by way of seasoning to prevent the *insipidity of their works being perceived by the reader.*" And that for you, Mrs. Trollope!

Finding many Englishmen in and around Cheviot on the outskirts of Cincinnati, and feeling that his family would be happy there, Joseph Bennet, unable to rent an adequate home, bought "a very beautiful West Indian cottage and paid \$6200 for it and stock"; established a checking account in the bank; and moved his entourage for the last time, he thought, and settled in. What a sigh of relief he must have heaved when the last little girl closed the gate behind her. The portmanteau and the chest and the carpetbag were unpacked for the last time; the coffee pot was enshrined on the sideboard; and with Mary Anne at the helm of a going domestic concern, he was at last free to go about his business of establishing himself in a new country.

In spite of the expense involved in his journey, Joseph Bennet arrived in Cincinnati a richer man than when he left England, for, on landing in New York, he found that the rate of exchange had increased his cash 20 per cent. He found it hard to believe this and says in his journal, "A good deal puzzled what to do with my money—the profit that the ex-

change yielded appears to me to be too good to be genuine." This increase was due, I have no doubt, to the fact that at the time of Joseph Bennet's arrival in America, the United States was in the throes of the financial panic of 1837, and the good hard money of the Bank of England which he had brought with him was worth a premium. I like William Wing's staid comment on the same point: "You are indeed a lucky man who . . . would now have lit on a visit to New York with 3 or 4 thousand sovereigns just at the nick of time when the exchange yields a profit of $\frac{4}{8}$ on each one of them. It is one of those chances that occur only to those who are born with that spoon in their mouths and instinct serves to teach them the use of it." Even with his added capital to invest, Joseph Bennet wanted to look before he leaped. Of course, he might re-establish himself in the watch and clock business in Cincinnati; business was good there, and his experience in London would have made a new venture in Cincinnati very easy.

But Joseph Bennet had other ideas. He did not want to be a city man, even in a new city; he had come to America for a larger life than that. This was a new country with wide lands to be bought cheaply and developed richly. His experience, his knowledge of men, his capital, and his youth and his zest for life—with these he might hope to become a country gentleman before he was sixty. He could give his wife the country life she needed, and his little girls a background worthy of their blood and breeding; he might even yet have a son to inherit his name and the estate he intended to accumulate. And so, after some weeks of search and investigation, he decided upon a place near the town of Carrollton, Kentucky, midway between Cincinnati and Louisville, where the Kentucky River emptied its muddy waters into the Ohio. The Kentucky was navigable for many miles back through the rich lands of Kentucky, which were perfect for the cultivation of tobacco and corn. Back in the low hills was a vein of fair building stone. Across the Ohio was the growing town of Madison,

Indiana, already connected by relatively good roads with the Wabash and White river valleys, and soon to be connected by rail with Indianapolis, the state capital. With all the advantages for production and distribution, Carrollton and vicinity seemed to Joseph Bennet the logical place for the investment of his capital, for the scene of his labors, and the establishment of that gentleman's home that he had long envisaged. He bought Kentucky bottom land for corn and upland for tobacco, and a quarry near Prestonville. He also purchased a general store, which soon became the most interesting item of his business.

I have neither letters nor diaries to tell me the details of the life of the Bennet family during the next two years and a half. At the end of 1838 his frail little wife, whose ill health had been the reason for the expedition into the New World, closed her eyes upon it all and left Joseph Bennet again a widower, and with a sixth daughter, Clara, one day old. Luckily, he had his complicated business to keep him occupied. He had to make it succeed! All his capital as well as considerable credit was invested in his plant; his future and that of his family was involved in its success. It required all his best effort to learn a new business in a new country with strange customers and associates. Fortunately he had his mother to preside over his household. And there was Mary Anne Rolfe! She took over the day-old baby, and probably all the other little girls, and life went on in the Bennet household. Family tradition and my knowledge of the chief actors in that domestic drama give me a pretty good idea of what it was like. Joseph Bennet was absent about his business for long hours, but home enough to keep in touch with the progress of his little girls, and to consult with Madame, his mother, as to the conduct of his household. I fancy he oftener than not wearily waived many a decision by referring the matter to Mary Anne, knowing that in some way she would see to it that the thread of family living would not snarl too badly.

For Joseph Bennet life did not move slowly. He had friends, fortunately. He made friends easily and chose them wisely, apparently, seeing them as often as he could after the business of the day was attended to. But he was probably lonely and wanted a wife and companion and mistress for his home. At the house of his friends, Dr. and Mrs. Clayton of Carrollton, he met, one night, the mistress of Carrollton's School for Young Ladies—and between them flashed at once that spark that changes the world for two people. And Joseph was ready to start another chapter in his rapidly unfolding life.

Living as I do in a rationalistic age, schooled in discounting sentiment and sentimental motives, I am always doubtful about love at first sight. So I tell myself that maybe there was no spark that flashed between Joseph Bennet and Bethania Bishop. Maybe it was more prosaic than that. He was a young man of thirty-nine, twice widowed, with six little girls to be cared for, and his mind pretty well taken up with the many irons he had in the fire. Bethania Bishop was a young widow of culture and intelligence, making a living for herself and her own little daughter by teaching the daughters of the substantial citizens of Carrollton. What was more reasonable and right than that they combine their interests and their families? Maybe that was the way it was; but I have Pa Bennet's letters to prove that it was more than that. Look:

CARROLLTON, 25th Nov. 1839

MY DEAR MADAM :

Since the period of my last visit to Carrollton, I have been impelled by an irresistible desire, to obtain the opportunity of becoming more intimately acquainted with yourself, as a prelude to the declaration of sentiments closely connected with the happiness of my future life.

As we are almost strangers to each other, I beg to refer you to my Friends, Dr. and Mrs. Clayton, for my standing in society, character, and circumstances, and as my stay here must be necessarily short, may I beg the favor of an early interview.

Mrs. Clayton at my request has kindly undertaken to convey this to you, and may I beg you will favor me with a reply through the same medium, I am

My dear Madam Very respectfully yours,

JOSEPH BENNET.

TO MRS. BISHOP, CARROLLTON

Something had evidently happened to Joseph Bennet!

BETHANIA CROCKER BISHOP'S STORY

WHO WAS THIS woman who so swiftly captured Joseph Bennet?

While Bethania Crocker Bishop Bennet is the center and heart of my story, it is hard to make her seem as real as I should like. To be sure, I can remember her; my childhood was filled with stories about her; as I was growing up I slept beneath the benign smile of her portrait. I even have some of her diaries and a bundle of her letters, but not the vital letters of her girlhood, nor her responses to Grandfather's ardent "addresses," nor the homely, familiar letters telling what she thought of her children and her home. By her fruits ye shall know her, but I wish I had more of the green branches of her life to show you.

I have a few records of her childhood and her youth, the first being the record of her birth, at Waquoit, Massachusetts, a small village on Cape Cod, on October 25, 1813. She was the oldest of four children born to the Reverend Peter Crocker and his wife, Jane Ewer Crocker, and they had named her Bethania Lewis.

The next record of Bethania, or as Peter Crocker wrote it then, Bethany, is of October 3, 1820, on which date her mother died and she and her brother Henry, her sister Jane, and the six-months-old baby were put to board with her Aunt Elizabeth Ewer in Falmouth, near by. In later years Bethania made some records of this period in her life, probably as nearly carefree as she was ever to know. I am particularly glad to have these records, because otherwise I should have always wondered if she had any of the simple pleasures of childhood, if she had ever been gay and silly as children ought to be. I love the pictures she leaves us of her childhood, conjured up

long afterwards by visiting the loved scenes her infancy knew, idealized somewhat of course, as all such memories must be.

"Well do I remember," she writes, "our evening romps with our younger aunts and uncles (there were ten of them of assorted ages) while the older and more dignified often came from the keeping room to look on at our sports. The faggots gathered during the day furnished both light and warmth for the evening play." They "played the old favorites, Blind Man's Buff, Puss in the Corner, and like boisterous games." Thank fortune for that glimpse into the past! Serious as was their habit, the Ewers still could play! "In the family room before the fire was arranged the tray of apples, the dish of nuts and the mug of cider from which at the proper time we all partook." I'm glad to have the picture of the hot and breathless young folk gathering around the fire "at the proper time" to chatter and eat and crack nuts, "while the tall clock and the bright brass warming pan caught the lights from the blazing fire and cast them back upon us like bright and sympathetic smiles." Some evenings there were no games but the atmosphere was warm and protective and the world a pleasant place.

But life wasn't all fun and frolic for the young Bethania, even at Aunt Elizabeth's. She and Jane and the young aunts had tasks to perform. Out-of-doors, to be sure, and in each other's company, but a stint to be done "before they could race down to the shores of 'Peter's Pond' to look for shells and smooth round stones, or range the fields for wild strawberries or the huckleberries on the hillside." Before these festivities began, there were "twenty purls" to knit, and when they set out from the house each girl was well started with a garter (a selvage torn from a yard of flannel) tied around her waist, a corncob inserted under it, their yarn measured and their task begun. "Such a snapping of needles by two seven year old girls is never heard nowadays," wrote Bethania years later. I'll venture not! They seemed to enjoy it, as part of the day's work, and even as they searched for berries,

they examined all the bushes and fences as they passed for the little tufts of fleece which sheep and lambs had left, going home with aprons filled, pleased to think "they had earned their stockings." "But what pleased me most," wrote Bethania many years later, "was to sit under the tall pines in the grove near to the house and listen to the wind through their tall branches. I felt sure good angels were around me there, that my dear departed mother hovered near me, that angels whispered to me from the tree tops."

I hope these thoughts of her mother, and the sense of her nearness dulled, in some measure, the memory she had recorded of the miserable day when, holding her father's hand, she had walked under the pines in the churchyard to her mother's open grave and listened to the clods falling upon the coffin. Many years later she wrote of the sense of misery and desolation which had oppressed her then. She was only seven and a half years old and should have been spared that misery. But life had caught her young and had early laid upon her slender shoulders the load she was to carry for many years.

Though Peter Crocker was married again, in 1821, to another of the Ewer sisters, I do not know whether Bethania returned to her father's home or stayed on with her Aunt Elizabeth. The next record of her activities is a reference in the Reverend Peter's diary in 1827 to his daughter Bethania teaching a small school in Falmouth, Massachusetts.

By that time there were three more children in the Crocker family. The Reverend Peter was receiving an annual salary of \$200.00 plus house, barn, and garden, and I fancy that Bethania's clear gray eyes saw the necessity for joining the ranks of the producers. I think she probably preferred her job to that of her sister Jane, who was right-hand man at home. Bethania was never fond of domestic detail, but there is every evidence that she was born with a teacher's instinct and ability. She had every chance to exercise her talent, for the steady and rapid succession of her younger brothers and

sisters supplied her with a practice school in which to develop a marvelous technique.

I don't know where she acquired the body of knowledge which she imparted to her pupils, although it was probably in her father's study that she learned the Latin and history she was teaching before she was twenty. The Reverend Peter, a Brown University man, was a learned as well as a godly man. It was not necessary in those days for a teacher to have a great deal of knowledge if she had the gift of imparting what she knew. In her father's study she probably learned the form of religious piety which was the very essence of her character. She was a natural student, she was a born teacher, and a devout and pious Christian, and she was all these things before she was fifteen. To the day of her death she was an avid student, an inspired teacher, and a devout and earnest Christian. As the twig was bent, so was the tree inclined.

I keep wishing I had something which would tell me more about those early years. Was there ever money enough for her and her sister to have any pretty clothes? When, aged fourteen, she taught that first school at Falmouth, did she "board around"? did she mingle with young people of the neighborhood? did she have any beaux? I have no answer to these questions. All I know is that after three years of teaching here, she went to Oxford, Ohio, to establish a school "for the instruction of young ladies in the higher branches of English Education." I have a copy of an Oxford paper, dated March 16, 1833, announcing the curriculum and terms for the coming year. You could take penmanship, arithmetic, English grammar and geography for a session of five months for \$4.00. Composition, rhetoric, history, chronology, philosophy (natural and moral), astronomy, and chemistry cost \$6.00, and instruction in needlework was thrown in without extra charge if you were still interested in sewing while you were ranging the universe in "a course of experimental Lectures on chemistry and Natural philosophy with the advantages of extensive Apparatus."

I confess I have never been able to decide just what chronology might be as distinct from history. Maybe Ma Bennet had a method of straining the dates out of history into a separate educational compartment, so that students might attack them separately. One thing that impresses me in this first printed statement of her educational policy was her interest in science, an interest which continued to her dying day. In 1833, the very word science had little real meaning in the United States. Darwin did not embark on his trip in the *Beagle* until 1831. The scientific method of investigation was at the very beginning of its development in America in the 1830's. Audubon did not publish the first of his great folios of bird portraits until 1827, and they had no general circulation until at least a decade later. It was not until about 1840 that Agassiz began his publishing in America, and later still that the results of his teaching became widespread. At the time Bethania came to her school in Oxford, scientific instruction was just being introduced into the education curriculum, and certainly science courses were not the usual offerings for the instruction of "young ladies." How her interest in scientific matters was awakened so early, how she reconciled its teachings with her pious Presbyterian convictions, I do not know. But I do know, from entries in her diaries, from the courses of study she offered in her successive schools, from the memories and anecdotes of her in family traditions, that her interest in scientific discovery and development was increasingly strong. Her reading, done at night after her schoolwork was finished, often by candlelight, was largely scientific in its nature. One of her great treasures was one of the folios of Audubon's *Birds of America*, bought probably at great sacrifice from the savings of her microscopic income—and wantonly destroyed years after her death by the vandal hands of a grandchild wanting fresh mural decorations for her playroom!

In one of her diaries which I once read she said (I must quote from memory), "I have been reading reports of the progress of the study of that great force, electricity. So far, man knows little about it, but I doubt not with increasing knowledge there will be developed increasing uses. I shall not live to see it, my children may not, but probably my grandchildren will light and heat their houses with it." I fancy that none of the duties to which that force has since been applied would have surprised her unduly.

To whatever educational heights the ambition of this nineteen-year-old schoolmistress may have led her, I am glad to have as my next record of her activities the following testimonial, published in the *Oxford Lyceum* of March 16, 1833. Her little school had gone well, and she had further plans she was eager to carry out.

The undersigned citizens of Oxford, take pleasure in announcing to the public, that the above named young Lady [Miss B. L. Crocker] has been teaching in this place near two years past, and has obtained the confidence and received the approbation of those who have committed their daughters to her care, and she is hereby recommended to an enlightened public, as a competent and successful instructress of youth.

R. H. Bishop
W. H. McGuffey
J. W. Scott
S. W. M'Cracken

Th. Armstrong
W. F. Ferguson
H. Little
A. I. Chittendon

Bishop was president of Miami University; McGuffey was later to edit the renowned series of school readers which molded the literary taste of an entire generation, and J. W. Scott's daughter, Caroline, became in after years the wife of Benjamin Harrison, twenty-third president of the United States.

Here then, at the ripe age of twenty, was Bethania successfully launched upon her career as schoolmistress, instructing, to the entire satisfaction of her patrons, the young daughters of the college town of Oxford. She took this career quite seriously, going to a summer school in New York

and studying with her father during summer vacations. I fancy she saw her life work opening before her. It was hard work, but it was interesting—an opportunity to exercise her gifts as student and teacher in surroundings appreciative of culture and religion. Her school would doubtless grow, and she saw a prosperous academic future before her. So she thought—and then, something happened!

Among the young people who formed Bethania's pleasant social world in Oxford was George Bishop, a son of President Bishop, a serious young man who had been studying for the ministry. In 1833 he was preaching as a supply in the Presbyterian Church at Oxford and rather expected, at the meeting of the Synod, to receive a permanent appointment there. There were certain complications in his plans, however, which he discussed very seriously with the young schoolmistress, who had been his good friend of late. She had asked his advice on certain spiritual matters. He had suggested regular periods of prayer, an attendance upon his Bible class, and continued study "to be holy and without offense, yourself, and then you will most powerfully recommend religion." They had evidently been carrying on this game of "Truth" for some time, and had established a basis of great candor and frankness, but apparently with no admixture of emotion. George began to have some suspicions as to where all this might lead, and gave the matter considerable anxious thought. If he should be called to remain in Oxford, it might not be advisable to take a wife from his own congregation; that step had often led to disastrous complications. And yet, Bethania had everything—piety and wit, executive ability and intelligence, and the devotion so necessary in his work. What to do? What to do?

Finally he wrote to her, a letter of advice and admonition which she had asked for, and a confession of his own disturbed state of mind; and then, when he was apparently finished, he came to the real core of his epistle.

I think I can see the hand of Providence directing my steps so far; and I cast all my care upon Him in the future.

But as it respects yourself—this is the conclusion to which I have come—I am willing to (and hereby) offer my hand, for better or worse, till death do us part. This is telling you “frankly” what I think, and the turn which I feel disposed to have this correspondence take. Are we of one mind? . . . To what conclusion have *you* arrived?

And if you think that a cold-blooded and unromantic proposal of marriage, listen to this.

If you are the woman whom God hath appointed for me, I want to know it; if not, I want to know it. Having no engagement out of my study this evening, that I am aware of, I will meet you (if you can make it convenient) at a throne of Grace between the hours of eight and nine to spread this matter before the Lord, and ask counsel at His hands. [!!] And should you not return me answer before, I will meet you again there on the same day and hour on the following week. And may He who ordereth all things for His own glory order our decision aright, choose our changes, form our plans, and hold up our goings in His path that our footsteps slip not!

Yours in Christian fellowship,

G. B. BISHOP.

Now I ask you! What kind of a proposal was that? I cannot believe that a woman of my grandmother's wit and understanding did not think that letter was funny, nor can I believe that a woman of her spirit could fail to feel the indignity of it. And yet, that was more than a hundred years ago, in a time when women were well schooled in humility and deference and knew quite definitely that their place in the world depended largely upon their marriage. Bethania probably saw quite plainly that the young divinity student was pompous and self-important. His usefulness in his profession was probably the most important thing in the world to him. He hadn't chosen her as his wife and asked for her answer like a man, but had referred the entire matter to a third party—The Almighty, to be sure, but a third party, nonetheless. I have no doubt she was entirely aware of all these things and yet was able to see that George had good stuff in him. She had known him a year or more; she knew his back-

ground and his plans and ambitions. They had tastes in common and a common devotion to religion and study. I think she saw not only what George could give her, but what, with tact and affection, she could do for George—and was willing to take a chance.

Grandma was too devoutly pious to have gone to that rendezvous at the throne of Grace with her tongue in her cheek, but she probably knew how the conference would turn out, and that the Providential blessing would be forthcoming.

She taught her "school for young ladies" for the following year, as announced in her notice, but immediately upon the close of the session, April 4, 1834, she and George Bishop were married. They went to Hanover, Indiana, to live, he to preach in the Presbyterian Church while teaching in the newly established McCormick Theological Seminary there; she to take her place as minister's wife and one of the faculty ladies. I assume that she made a good faculty wife, and I have an idea that her executive ability made her a valuable minister's wife, which, by the way, is not the same thing as the wife of the minister. All these things I assume, but I have a letter to prove what she did for the minister himself. In less than two years, as the loving wife of George Bishop, she made that pompous young man over into a lovable human being. From being "the woman the Lord has appointed for me," Bethania had become in his eyes his "dearly beloved wife," whose sweet kisses he longed for, about whose welfare and comfort in his absence he was concerned, whose interest in every detail of his journey he was assured of. The freedom with which he discussed with her church politics and the utter lack of restraint in his comments upon the behavior of his "female fellow-passengers," shows plainly what she had done for him.

I think possibly these short years of her marriage to George Bishop were the happiest of her life; they were certainly more carefree than those to come. She was secure; she had congenial companionship; she had a pleasant social life; and

she had her first baby. Now she could begin to live a normal woman's life.

But she was never meant to live the normal woman's life! By December, 1837, she was a widow with a baby daughter to support and care for. Her young, devoted and dedicated husband was taken from her. Wearily she responded to a call from Carrollton, Kentucky, to come there to teach. Now, while Carrollton was a pleasant town about twenty miles east of Hanover on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River, Hanover had the advantage of being, in 1837, not only the seat of a Presbyterian college, but a theological school as well. The Presbyterian church of that day was concerned with developing an educated clergy for its church in the West, and Hanover College and its theological school were among the outposts of that movement. The town was a pleasant place to live for one of my grandmother's tastes, and it was hard for her to leave it, with all its associations, to take up work in a new field. She wasn't happy about it. Aside from her bitter grief for her husband, she was uneasy in the new place and had forebodings of disaster until she felt, at times, as if she must give it all up and go back to Hanover. "These people are very kind and pleasant," she writes to George Bishop's mother, "but I cannot bear to be engaged in that which brings me in such contact with strangers, & I am constantly in dread of something and cannot tell what. I feel as though I was to be ill-treated, or slandered or something of the kind. I try to conquer these feelings by considering that all things are ordered by a God who doesn't willingly afflict but for our good. . . . I know I have not the energy I once had, and were it not for dear little Meggie, I should not have attempted to teach a school. While I am spared to her I wish to provide for all her wants."

She realized later, after a visit to Hanover, that Hanover was no more home to her now than Carrollton had been, and that all one can do about grief is to bear it, day by day and hour by hour. The letters written to her dead husband's family show a different Bethania from any we are ever to see

again. Here she is the brokenhearted young widow, grown used to love and companionship and sheltering care, but suddenly bereft of this love and companionship and sent back to her old place in the trenches, burdened by grief, oppressed by vague apprehension. Never again, in later years, during a long struggle in face of poverty, heavy responsibilities, and hard work, were there any evidences of a break in her brave front. This is not the Bethania her descendants know best, calmly courageous, resourceful, stoical; but a young soul in the anguish of its first great grief. Sad as it is, I am glad we have this picture of the broken and grieving young wife—she wasn't quite twenty-four years old!—to complete the image of the Bethania Crocker Bishop we best know. "We are well," she writes sadly to her mother-in-law in Oxford, Ohio. "Have twenty-four scholars this week and expect more next week. There is a good prospect for a female seminary here, but I feel as though I could not bear the exertion. Last week I felt as though I could not stay away from Hanover any longer; that it would afford me a melancholy pleasure to tread again the paths we once trod together, and sit where so often we have held sweet converse. But when I got there on Friday eve., I felt like one *alone*. Yes, though among friends, there was an aching void."

She struggled to her feet, feebly in the beginning, stumblingly, perhaps, but her Spartan courage kept her going, and the work itself helped to heal the wound. Besides, she and little Meggie had to eat. She had come to Carrollton at the suggestion of Richard Butler, the spokesman for a group of Carrolltonians who wished a school for their daughters. He had made arrangements for a house where she and Meggie could live and where she held her school. He had introduced her to the friendly people of the town. He and his gentle wife did all in their power to help her, and during the rest of her life they were her faithful friends. Shortly after coming to Carrollton she writes to George Bishop's mother,

"You wished me to write respecting the Butler family. There are 4 single sisters here; 3 of them, Misses Nellie [Ellenor], Fanny, & Mary are keeping house together. Miss Caroline is living with her brother Richard Butler. There are three brothers, all have families, Richard, Thomas, & William, & one sister [Jane] lives in Louisville married to Dr. [Urban E.] Ewing. They are all wealthy people, but one of the brothers pious. The sisters are all members of the Presbyterian Church." Actually there were two other brothers in the family, Percival, Jr., and Edward. I have still a photograph of the benign countenance of one of the brothers, whether pious or unregenerate, I don't know. Caroline later married Judge James Pryor of Covington. The father of this family was Gen. Percival Butler, a Virginian, who had been an officer in the Revolution and had come to Kentucky in 1796. He was brother of General Richard Butler who was killed in St. Clair's defeat.*

Besides the Butlers, there were several families in Carrollton who came from the English colony at Cheviot. The social life was pleasant and informal and Bethania doubtless was as much a part of it as was possible for one in her circumstances to be.

It was at this period when Bethania Bishop was sadly resuming her old place as teacher and endeavoring to rebuild her life, that Joseph Bennet wrote to her his urgent request for an appointment to discuss with her matters which, as he said, greatly concerned his future happiness.

In his letter, Pa Bennet manfully laid all his cards on the table. He told her what he wanted from her, and what he considered were his own qualifications for a place in her life and affections. He told her something of the story of his life, and confessed his urgent need of her companionship and affection. I have his letters and I'm proud of them. He took Grandmother's refusal of his proposals with dignity. I

* A good account of the Butlers of Carrollton, Kentucky, appeared in the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, January 8, 1878.

haven't her letters. I don't know from her own pen just what Grandmother said or wrote. There was something about "insuperable objections." Pa Bennet was a Baptist, and that, to a Presbyterian, may have been an insuperable objection. Maybe she couldn't bear the thought of anyone else in George Bishop's place; maybe Pa Bennet seemed to take his religion too lightly, for beside the flame of George Bishop's devout piety, Mr. Bennet's matter-of-fact, everyday Christianity might have seemed somewhat less warm and ardent; maybe all those little girls and the somewhat grim Madame Bennet were just too formidable for Bethania to consider.

I think that Bethania probably realized that, temperamentally, she and Joseph Bennet were as the rock and the wave, and she instinctively shrank from the daily adjustments their two strong natures must make, were they to join their lives. When I look into the serious eyes and the grave face of a daguerreotype of Bethania Bishop taken at this period, I know that her decision was not made lightly, and that she honestly felt that the objections, whatever they might have been, were insuperable. There was nothing of the coquette about Grandmother, and I'm sure that she did not give what she believed to be her final decision without full and prayerful consideration to all the factors of her problems. I shall always cherish Joseph Bennet's letter accepting that decision. It was written February 3, 1840:

MY DEAR FRIEND:

It would be impossible for me to express the pain, and disappointment I felt on receiving your decision, conveyed in your note of Friday evening. My feelings would not permit me to reply before. However great my anxiety may be on this subject, I feel it would be wrong in me to renew my proposals, at the same time, nothing would afford me greater delight than to know at any future time that your *present* "insuperable objections" were removed. Permit me in conclusion to say—my heart is *still* yours, and that my most intense and tender affections centre in yourself, and if I cannot realize the fond hopes I had indulged, I shall yet be delighted to cultivate your friendship, and hope to have the

favor of your advice in the training and education of my dear girls. I hope to have the pleasure of calling on you some evening this week. With kind regards, I am, My dear friend,

Yours affectionately,

JOSEPH BENNET.

And so they were married, six months later! July 9, 1840.

I do not know what changed Bethania's mind, but I can guess. Joseph Bennet was a man of great charm, handsome, gay, impetuous, and yet withal thoughtful and intelligent; he interested her enormously. He was a man of considerable experience in the world, he was successful and could make life pleasant for her in material ways, and, unquestionably, he loved her devotedly and wooed her ardently. Probably when he called upon her "one evening next week," she had begun to realize how she would miss the give and take of that quick mind and that gay spirit. Maybe long evenings spent in preparing for the next day's school routine seemed a bit drab after the evenings with Joseph Bennet, with the color of his talk and the warmth of his courtship. She was only twenty-six years old, and she could picture all the drab evenings stretching before her. More probably, Joseph Bennet just plain swept her off her feet with his love, his manful acceptance of his dismissal, his affection for her little Meggie, and his bid for her interest in his own little girls. So far as I can see, the man had everything. She probably saw it, too, and changed her mind.

There is a family tradition, unsupported by evidence, that once Bethania had reconsidered her decision, Joseph pressed for an immediate marriage—it was always well-nigh impossible for Joseph to wait for anything—and, having almost lost her once, he wanted to make Bethania his without delay. Bethania had contracted to teach her school until June, and she would not consider breaking that contract. Then Joseph had a thought; he and Bethania would be married at once, but they would live in Carrollton until school was out—he spent most of his time there anyway—and when June came, he and

Bethania and little Meggie would join the Bennet forces in Cheviot until their plans were made for a new home for them all in Carrollton. It seemed reasonable to Joseph, and most desirable. I do not know whether Bethania agreed or not; knowing her, I think it unlikely. But when Cousin Mary got wind of the plan she arose in her quiet might in her first open opposition to the head of the Bennet family. "Not at all," said she. "Bennets don't do things like that. Important matters are treated with dignity and importance." How did he suppose his mother and his little girls would look upon a marriage like that? A marriage without a wedding? How would it look in Carrollton for the schoolmistress to take him into her home? Or had he planned to set up housekeeping there until the end of school? And how about little Meggie? No! Bennets did not do things that way. I don't know whether or not this is a factual account, but it has truth in it. That is the way these people would have acted, the ardent, impetuous Joseph, the conscientious, serene Bethania, and the incomparable Mary Anne.

III

JOSEPH AND BETHANIA

ON JULY 9, 1840, Bethania took up the third phase of her life. It was a new phase. Very little that she had learned in her marriage to George Bishop could assist her in the way of life to which she was now called. I do not know that it proved as complicated to Grandmother as it looks to me. I do not know what she thought about it or how she went about living it, but I fancy she drew a long breath before plunging into the organized Bennet family which awaited her arrival. It was no small matter, this enterprise she was undertaking, to enter and assume her rightful place in this odd family group. First, there was Madame, her mother-in-law, for some years the nominal head of the family, and naturally somewhat jealous of the newcomer; Mary Anne, the real center and heart of the organization, who might very reasonably be wearing chips on both shoulders; and finally, six little girls in various stages of wonder as to what their new mother was like. The little girls probably gave Bethania little concern. She knew a good deal about little girls, and was bringing one of her own to the little group which began to look like a budding school. She knew exactly what to do with a girls' school. Madame Bennet was more formidable, but in some way cordial relations were immediately established with her, and the two women lived for many years in the same household in amity and mutual respect.

As for Mary Anne, there grew between her and Bethania a lifelong devotion: for better—for worse; for richer—for poorer; in sickness and in health. Theirs has always been to me a great saga of friendship which I am proud to have as part of my background. They were so different, these two women; their experience, their training, and their backgrounds had few points of likeness. Bethania was Puritan New England,

through and through; her interests were intellectual and religious; the problems that had arisen in her life had been solved by the exercise of her intellect according to the standards of duty, by the aid of prayer; her mind and her conscience had been well trained and thoroughly disciplined. Mary Anne Rolfe, on the other hand, had been brought up in the school of experience. She had had little formal education, and so far as I know, was only mildly religious. But her heart overflowed with affection; she could not have stayed her hand from helpfulness if she had tried, and her practical knowledge of domestic arts and her skill in their management made her a tower of strength in any household. Almost immediately there grew up between Bethania and Cousin Mary that understanding comradeship which is one of the best gifts life bestows upon deserving women. Both were just and generous and affectionate, neither had an atom of pettiness in her nature. There was no room for small matters in Bethania's world because, being taken up with large interests, she had no time to consider small matters. There were none in Mary Anne's life because nothing was small in her eyes. If her time was taken up with the care and feeding of an infant, it was not that she loved detail and ignored the world about her, but rather because she had promised a dying mother to save her day-old baby, and minute attention to small things was the way to save it. If the particulars of managing a somewhat complicated household consumed her time and her energies, it was not because she had a soul for domestic detail, but because she knew that not only an army, but a family, progresses upon its stomach, and nothing which greased the wheels of its progress was unimportant in her eyes. If Bethania was an efficient organizer of schools, Mary Anne was no less efficient in organizing her household, and each was quick to recognize the art of the other.

And so, happy and at peace, Bethania Crocker Bishop Bennet settled down to her new life as daughter-in-law to a somewhat crotchety old lady, the co-operating associate of a most successful domestic administrator, the mother of a family

of seven daughters of assorted ages and ancestry, and, most important of all, the wife of a successful businessman who was growing in importance in his community and becoming involved daily in widening circles of interest and influence.

By this time Joseph Bennet had added to his stone business in Prestonville and his farming in and around the bottom lands of the Kentucky home, small packet boats for transporting his crops and his stone, as a modern farmer buys trucks; he had a general store which soon became an increasingly important element in his business, a business which necessitated trips at least once a year to the market in New York or Boston or Baltimore.

Shortly after his marriage to Bethania, he began the building of the new home he had had in mind ever since he had first thought of leaving England; a country gentleman's house on a modest scale, with grounds about it, and trees, and a garden and outbuildings; a house with room for his growing family.

I have the contract for the building of that house, let in 1840, and a few years ago I saw the house itself. It hardly seemed large enough to have housed the Bennet family of 1840, let alone the increase that Joseph so confidently expected. But it had charm, and when I saw it, had been practically unchanged since my mother knew it as a child, seventy-five years before. I know, because she said the photographs I took back to her might have been taken in her childhood. The house is set high on a bank sloping down to the Ohio River. Part way down is a terrace where are the remains of a formal garden, the work largely of Cousin Mary Anne and my grandmother, I am told. Verandahs go around three sides of the house, and from the one in front there is a long view both up and down the river. In the back was a white fence, separating the dooryard from the outbuildings at the side, and from the paddock stretching to the turnpike beyond. Over the woodshed and the well house drooped a gigantic willow tree.

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BETHANIA BENNET



JOSEPH BENNET

Living in Cheviot as she did immediately after her marriage, I fancy Grandmother had many anxious moments over that house; building a house at long range is always ticklish business, and she might well have been concerned. The contract was explicit and her husband was constantly back and forth between Carrollton and Cheviot and could keep an eye on things, and I have no doubt that Bethania, herself, made numerous visits to her new home as it took shape. I do not know just when the house in Cheviot was sold and the Bennet family, bag and baggage, installed in the new place; Madame Bennet and Bethania, and Martha and Mary and Sarah, Elizabeth and Fannie and Clara, Bethania's little Meggie, and valiant Mary Anne.

As I have said, Mary Anne had that family well organized long before Bethania came into it. They had been taught that the family, not the individual, was the social unit, although they would have looked at you wide-eyed if you had said so in words. They had learned that children should be seen and not heard, now considered a pernicious doctrine, but useful in a family of seven children. They had early learned that elder sisters were in a measure responsible for the younger in the family group, responsible in the matters of clean hands, brushed hair, fresh aprons, and prompt appearance at the table. It was a good family, but it still looked a good deal like a harem. I do not see how Pa Bennet escaped some apprehensive moments when he faced some of his problems. The matter of shoes, now. Mary Anne and Bethania could prolong the life of clothes, making over and turning and passing down dresses and petticoats and hats; but shoes—you can't turn and make over shoes, and I should have thought Joseph Bennet might have had moments of panic when he faced the thought of all those girls growing up to be supplied with winter shoes and summer shoes. Fortunately for him, he knew nothing of the era of white shoes and blue shoes and brown shoes and black—best and everyday was as far as he went, but even that must have been somewhat appalling. I have often

wondered where they kept them, best and everyday, belonging to Grandmother, Cousin Mary, Ma Bennet and Meggie, and Martha and Mary and Sarah, Fannie and Elizabeth and baby Clara.

But there were shoes enough and suitable clothes and generous equipment for a secure and happy life for the family in the new house in Carrollton. Joseph Bennet had very definite ideas for the family regime—or, at least the Bennet daughters thought they were his; there is little doubt in my mind that they were mainly Cousin Mary's ideas, tactfully referred to him as the male head of the house. Life was busy and reasonably free and easy all day, but when evening came, Mary Anne saw to it that the smaller girls had an early supper of bread and milk, as all good English children had, and were put to bed upstairs before the elders and Martha and Mary and Sarah sat down to their evening meal. It had only been a short time since Mary had been one of the little ones, and she knew well the frolics going on upstairs while she and her sisters politely—and regretfully—ate with their elders. If guests came later in the evening, the older girls might enjoy them decorously, but Mary knew that the real fun was upstairs, where the youngsters hung over the banisters and mimicked in whispers the guests below, or frolicked in the big nursery until they were finally sleepy. They knew how to keep matters within bounds, for Cousin Mary, though winking at a loose construction of the "early to bed" dictum, would brook no disturbance of the family downstairs. Under Cousin Mary's skillful regime, life went on with order and system. She taught the girls the domestic arts she knew so well, while Bethania attended to their spiritual and intellectual instruction. The Bennet family played its part in the social life of Carrollton, and the silver and the china that have come down to us were no doubt a part of many a pleasant tea party, when the Butlers and Claytons and the Howes and maybe some of the young theological students from Hanover were gathered together on winter afternoons.

And before long there were "prospects." Of course no one said anything about it in general conversation, but a baby being no novelty in Joseph Bennet's experience, I have no doubt he and Bethania discussed the matter and agreed that it would be nice if the "prospect" should be a boy. Pa Bennet could not have spared any one of his little girls, but I am sure he hoped this one would be a boy. But it wasn't! It was my mother, born December 19, 1841, and named Emma. She told me years later that never by word or look or whispered comment during her entire childhood had she been given to suspect that there might have been too many girls in the family, or even that a little masculine leaven might have done something for the group. Ma Bennet was too good a Christian to question the dispensations of Providence, and too good a psychologist to allow any child of hers to be conditioned with an inferiority complex over her sex, although, of course, she never had heard of an inferiority complex, and she wouldn't have mentioned sex aloud.

But to return to our chronicle—Carrollton, which was to be the scene of the Bennet family activities for many years, was, in the 1840's, a pretty little village set on the Kentucky side of the Ohio River, midway between Cincinnati and Louisville. In spite of the river traffic going by the door, it was in those days a quiet town; it had no great industries and no great enterprise on the part of its citizens, who, when a railroad proposed to run its line through the village, rose as one man to prevent that calamity. What! a railroad in Carrollton, smoking up the town and screeching through the streets! Perish the thought! It would spoil the quiet beauty of the place. The railroad made a detour and the Carrolltonians followed the ways of their fathers and traveled by boat. Life seems to have been pleasant, simple enough, and yet based upon a breadth of interest rather unusual in a small river town in the forties. The early settlers had been Virginians by way of Tennessee, and their traditions very largely determined the atmosphere of the place. Of recent years several of the Eng-

lish and Scottish settlers of Cheviot and Cincinnati had come down the river to settle and develop the country. Pa Bennet was one of these, and to the life of the community he contributed his gay and vivid spirit, his point of view, a rather metropolitan, if not cosmopolitan, point of view gained from a life in London, his residence in Cincinnati, and frequent business trips to the seaboard cities, as well as from a rather wide reading and reflection. Bethania Bennet brought the angle of the New England Puritan, modified, if you can modify a New England Puritan, by experiences in Midwest Presbyterian centers, where her mental growth had been stimulated by her study of the classics and what she called "natural philosophy"—natural science in its rudimentary stages.

Both Joseph and Bethania were accustomed to making friends. Early in their acquaintance Bethania writes to Joseph: "I have always sought and obtained the friendship of the wise and good," to which he had replied, "such, I trust in some humble degree, has been my case, although from my extensive intercourse with society I have been sometimes obliged to form connections with persons not specially pious." I do not know what was Grandmother's reaction to that. While she certainly chose decidedly pious friends when she could, I think she probably had enough sense and generosity to enjoy companionship with all kinds, and I am sure the Bennet circle was broad and varied.

I like to think of those seven years in Carrollton as happy years for her—she was secure, she was beloved, she was, as always, useful. As I have said, she came into a rather complicated household where she had to establish her position as its head. Her first duty, assumed at once, was the education of the seven little girls, ranging in age from thirteen-year-old Martha to her own little Meggie, a shy baby of two and a half, and Joseph's youngest child, Clara. The composite group stemmed from three mothers and two fathers. Educating the young Bennets was no simple matter.

Joseph Bennet was, I fancy, an occupation in himself, with his many interests, his rather fixed ideas, his great charm, his frequently tempestuous devotion, and his admittedly quick temper. He had had two mates who had had no thoughts, as far as he knew, beyond his plans, his desires, his pleasures. They had both been physically frail and affectionately dependent, of good birth, with the education usually given to the well-bred young English women of their day. They had developed in Joseph Bennet all the protective instincts and all the kindness of an intrinsically sweet nature, but they had not prepared him for a wife like Bethania. Here was a mature woman of character and experience, able to stand on her own feet and accustomed to doing so. She was capable of being a good wife, too. She knew a good deal about men, for she had dealt with them successfully from the day she had left her father's study to organize and teach her first school, to the day when, as a brokenhearted young widow, she had written to a grieving father the things he most wanted to know about his son's last days. She had been in the front-line trenches, and knew what it meant to wrest a living from a none-too-sympathetic world. Here was distinctly a different woman from the gentle creatures who had heretofore looked to Joseph for care and comfort and ideas and a way of life. He adored her, and looked upon her as "a perfect woman, nobly planned, to warn, to comfort and command." She was too wise to require much warning and never a command. She maintained her status as a person and pursued her own path in a way to which Joseph often found it hard to accustom himself, and over which he admittedly became temperamental.

He could not bear her out of his sight; she realized that, and yet there were times when she deemed it advisable to visit her aged father; to prolong the visit by going to her sister; once, even, to visit the family of George Bishop. She wasn't wilful about it—she merely consulted him about it as one reasonable person with another. She discussed the matter freely—and went! Sometimes he rebelled; sometimes he

sulked. He was wretched without her. He missed her miserably. One time when she proposed such an absence he made himself extremely disagreeable and subsequently apologized in a much-prized letter.

One of the few letters I possess from my grandmother's pen is of this period and shows her tact, her consideration, and at the same time, her calm reliance upon her own judgment of what was to be done in the circumstances. She has written in some detail of her cordial reception in Oxford by her old friends, her old pupils, and the family of her former husband, George Bishop. She had had a small ovation by young and old. "But I fear," she writes, "you will be jealous of me for speaking so much of former friends and think it will make me dissatisfied with home. Not so! I find it has opened my heart more. I love home better. I love my children better, & *you beyond all expression*. It has done me good to *feel* that others love me out of my own immediate family, & to hear and feel that affection and gratitude are the reward of my former labours. It encourages me to hope that our own dear children will cheer my old age (if permitted to live) with *their* affection. Why should I not make the affection and gratitudes of others, a source of confidence and hope in relation to them? Happy beyond expression, I shall be if they love *me* as I love *them*." Then for a page she resumes what apparently has been a long-drawn theological discussion, fortified with Scripture, and ending, "I am willing to read and converse on the subject, & if I am wrong, believe I am open to conviction." (But you'll have to be good, Grandpa!)

Here was something Joseph had never before encountered: a challenge from the wife of his bosom to convert her to his faith! They had not merely agreed to disagree on this point. He was convinced that he had the right in this matter, and he sincerely desired to convince this sweetly reasonable woman. He had to be good. No "Papa Knows Best" doctrine would avail in this case. She sent a message to her baby, a year and a half old, and adds, "Give her many kisses for me. I think

of you all many times, *but of you especially*. I am impatient to see you." Then follows a tentative arrangement to meet him in Cincinnati and return home with him. "Come as soon as you can," she writes, "and believe me as ever your devoted, affectionate wife, BETHANIA."

This letter crossed one he wrote her, a letter so human, so characteristic, so revealing of the Joseph Bennet whom my grandmother knew so well that I can't resist quoting:

MY DEAREST:

It is now ten days since I have heard from you. I have been anxiously looking for a letter for nearly a week past. Indeed, for the last day or two, I have been quite unhappy fearing that something must have befallen you. In your last you said that you would write me to say when I was to come for you. Not having heard, I have concluded to start tomorrow evening.

I am not very well. [I hate to suspect Joseph Bennet of a play for wifely pity, but I wouldn't put it past him.] I believe I have overworked myself. The rest of the family are quite well. I cannot remain longer without seeing you. If I could frequently hear from you, the separation would not be so painful. I never knew till this, how much I love you. I shall not write you a long letter as I expect so soon to have the pleasure of seeing you . . . Are you better? Oh, how I wish I could get an immediate answer to this question.

Goodby, my dearest Bethania, assure yourself of my most ardent love. I am

YOUR DEVOTED HUSBAND.

A little over a year later, in June, 1844, taking along her second child by Joseph, another daughter, Alice, now six months old, Bethania went for a visit with friends in Cincinnati. Joseph Bennet had himself better in hand this time, and the letter he writes is taken up more fully with news items than those written the previous year. Their good friend, Mrs. Clayton, has had, and lost, a baby girl and Mary Anne's skill and help had been called for. The Frankfort city band which had come for the Masonic procession had stayed to give a concert in the courthouse, and afterwards there was a ball. Moreover, there had been a political meeting in the after-

noon, and what with that and the Masonic procession and the band, the children had practically gone crazy with excitement. Then follows some church gossip, some details about domestic repairs, and the behavior of the little girls. Anyone might have written all that, but Joseph Bennet with a full heart was unmistakably the author of these lines :

You went off in such a hurry at last that I forgot to give you the Powell's address [as if Bethania would start on *any* journey without knowing her destination!] I hope you will enjoy your visit. I had quite a contest while we were on the wharf between feeling and propriety. You must accept the will for the deed. [What do you suppose went on? He would probably have been glad for any excuse at the last moment to have kept her with him.] I need not say that I very much want to see you and dear baby. Give her plenty of kisses for me, take an abundance for yourself. I am very lonely of an evening, but you are so good to stay at home that I dare not repine at your occasional absence. Think of me with affection and believe that I love you most sincerely. I am

Your devoted husband

JOSEPH BENNET.

Most of my grandfather's letters that I possess were written while on business trips East, made for the purpose of buying goods for his store; but though his object may have been business, his letters show him to be the same vigorous, alert, inquisitive traveler he had been on his initial journey in 1837. Nothing escaped him, and now that he had his intelligent and sympathetic Bethania to write to instead of mere entries to make in a journal, he could give full rein to his enthusiasms. Like many of similar temperament, he never really savored the full flavor of an experience until he had shared it. Like all good letters, his are shot through with the temperament of the writer, and his lively descriptions, keen comments upon what he saw, the welling up of the joy or conflict within him, give us an animated picture of a very vivid person.

In August, 1845, he made a rather longer trip than ordinary; he expected to be gone not longer than a month and that

gave him none too wide a margin, for early in September Bethania expected her third child, and naturally felt that Joseph Bennet might have delayed that trip until after the baby's safe arrival. I don't know why he chose this time for this journey. Probably it was the customary time for him to buy goods; possibly he couldn't bear the prospect of being the only male present at such a feminine conclave; he knew from repeated experience that here was no place for a man. As Gertrude Stein says, "Home is no place for a father." I do not know what took place between them when he announced his plan, but Joseph Bennet's first letter on this journey plainly betrays that his lively temperament had had some sort of a flare-up. It is entirely possible that Bethania with perfect dignity had reproached him, and might have said, as many a wife before and since has said, "You wouldn't say that if you loved me." She probably reminded him that he wouldn't be home when she most needed him and may very possibly have told him quite sharply what she considered his duty. I fancy Bethania's quiet voice and calm words could have been quite telling without overstepping what both she and Joseph considered her wifely duty. I do not know what he thought during those long days of his journey to New York; there was plenty of time to think of many things. I do know that this is what he wrote from Wheeling, midway of his journey.

I hope that you will take care of yourself and that you get along well and happy. I wish I could see you all *now* and *more especially* your beloved self. You are seldom many minutes from my thoughts, and my feelings toward you are those of ardent affection. You *are indeed* my beloved Bethania. And if in my irritable moments my expressions have been inconsistent with tender affection, I entreat your forgiveness and assure you with all my sincerity that I do tenderly love you, and more than this, no human being ever engrossed my affection as yourself. This may appear strange, but it is nevertheless true, and I have often told you so. . . . Give my sincere love to all and accept of much, very much, from your devoted husband, J. BENNET.

Goodbye my love; think of me with affection.

From New York some days later—

I shall be glad enough to get home and see you, my lovely B. You will forgive me, won't you, whenever my conduct has been unkind and my language harsh. Remember me in your prayers and especially pray that whatever is wrong in my disposition and character may be remedied. You know that you can rely on the constancy of my affection, and that I ever feel unkindly is my sorrow. I know you often think of me with tender affection; you have given me so many proofs of it that I cannot—I will not doubt it. . . . Oh how I do wish I could hear from you to know how you are. But I know you are in good hands. Your Covenant God will take care of you. [Can there have been words between Presbyterian and Baptist?] And you are surrounded by those who will consult your safety and comfort. Had it been otherwise I should certainly not have left you. I hope and pray that whether or not I am at home you may have a safe time.

Naturally enough he had Bethania on his mind and conscience, but he was otherwise disturbed, also. It was a very late summer with unseasonable heat; the boats were crowded and almost unendurably hot, so that he got almost no sleep. By the time he reached Baltimore he was almost exhausted. One day there on hot city pavements put him to bed, for he was not only near sunstroke but was coming down with influenza. He did not tell Bethania about that, confining his Baltimore letter to remarks upon the unprecedented growth of that city and to his disappointment in Wheeling, which looked to him like the English industrial towns he remembered. The Ohio River, he wrote, between Wheeling and Cincinnati, was far less interesting than their own stretch of river with blue Kentucky hills rising beyond it; in fact nothing could compare with the comforts of home where everything ran like clockwork under the capable management of Mary Anne, and where his lovely B. and all the little girls waited to welcome him. He wished he was there that moment. And yet, in the face of all that homesickness, he did not hasten home! His next letter was written from Syracuse. It told the whole truth about the miserable journey and confessed how wretched he had been. When he

left New York for Albany on the homeward trip, he was so sick he thought he should never reach home. He did not explain why he chose the northern route from New York to Cincinnati, sick as he was and anxious as he was to reach home before his month was up. He had probably planned it that way. Maybe he was not willing to risk again the heat of the southern route. I think in all probability his choice was made because he had never traveled that way before and wanted to see what it was like. His appetite for new sights and new scenes was insatiable. The letters to Bethania telling of his adventures, which probably reached home only a very few days before he did, are worth including, giving as they do, an inimitable picture of the writer and revealing glimpses of his world.

SYRACUSE, N. Y. Aug. 25th, 1845

MY DEAREST LOVE:

I left New York at seven o'clock on Monday morning—so unwell I hardly thought of seeing you again, but I am now *quite recovered*. . . . Monday morning was a fine clear cool morning and the air or something else acted as a charm, for I had not been on an hour before I felt like another man, and by the time I got to Albany I felt almost well. I should not have told you this unless I had quite recovered as you could render me no assistance; but I want you to unite with me in praising God for His great mercy & goodness. I feel delighted and happy now not only that my health is restored but that I am getting nearer home and my dear beloved family. I ought, however, to mention that the morning after I received one of your letters I felt a little better and the delight of hearing from you and home gave a temporary joyousness to my feelings . . . I must tell you all about the beauties of the Hudson when I get home, and our fine boat with over 500 passengers. I saw the Highlands, West Point, the wreck of the "Swallow," &c, &c, &c. We got to Albany about 5 o'clock in the evening. It is a very beautiful place, but I cannot pause to describe it. We left Albany this morning by rail road through Schenectady, Amsterdam, Little Falls, Utica, Rome, Manlius &c, to this place, Syracuse, the description of which I must also defer. Mr. [Nicholas] Longworth and daughter left New York with me and are going this route home, so I shall have company to Cincinnati, though I cannot talk much with him on his hobby,

"horticulture"—the old man has a perfect green house with him as specimens and a live cock and hen of some rare breed from N. Jersey. Whenever the old man can buy a peach or a strange apple, he does it most eagerly for the stones and pips. I am sure during the time I have been with him he has eaten enough peaches (for the stones) to give a horse the bowel complaint. We leave here in the morning at 7 o'clk for Buffalo where we hope to arrive at 5 o'clk and, as we shall be within an hour's ride of Niagara and find that we will have to wait a day for the boat, we have proposed to take a peep at Nature's great wonder.

BUFFALO, Thursday morning, we arrived here last night about eleven o'clk instead of five. We had more cars than the engine could take with its accustomed speed, and consequently were six hours behind our time. Some places where there was a rise in the plane we had to get out and walk. But the worst of all was [that] on account of our slow progress they would not stop for dinner. Just imagine about 300 poor creaters shut up in a railroad car from 7 to 11 without food—but we got along pretty well, what with crackers and apples. When we arrived here most of the hotels were full, and there we were flying about the city in small parties, or singly in search of bed and food, and the wind was blowing bitterly cold down the lake. I can tell you that my bombazine unmentionables felt about as warm as capnot [?] breeches would be. A little before 12 I got in here—the Martin House—got my supper and went to bed. But I must quit; the Niagara car bell is ringing.

BUFFALO, Friday morning—

MY DEAREST,

I have seen the Falls ! ! ! And here I must stop. However any person could have the *hardihood* to attempt a description of Niagara Falls is to me utterly incomprehensible. If you say that they combine all that is awful, grand, sublime, beautiful, you say nothing, or nothing to the purpose. I stood gazing at them for hours with the most profound awe, and wonder and delight (weeping like a child) (Don't read this to anybody) "Great and marvelous are Thy works, O Lord God of Hosts. The whole earth is full of Thy Glory." The cars left at half-past two; as soon as I had dined I ran down to have a farewell look, when on my return, the cars were gone! I had to stay at Niagara all night, which gave me longer time there, and I was lulled to sleep by the loud rumbling roar of these mighty waters. The hotel is about as far from the Falls as Winslow's barn. I started out at 6 in

the morning and got here to breakfast about half past seven. On going down to the Wharf, I found to my surprise and mortification, that owing to the two boats of the Toledo line being laid aside for repairs, that we could not go till seven o'clock tomorrow (Saturday) evening. I have been in every direction to find some other mode of getting home, but find that by no plan can I get home sooner than by going with the boat. The Captain says he will be in Toledo in time for us to take the Canal packet on Monday morning, but this will depend a good deal on the wind, &c. The canal packets profess to go in $2\frac{1}{2}$ days, but most likely it will be three days. You may imagine how mortifying and distressing it must be for me to be kept here two days when I want so much to be at home and to see you, my beloved one, and my dear family. But I can't help it. I expect I should have been longer the other way, and I did not anticipate this delay. How I do long to see you all, and especially once more to embrace you, my dearest B. Oh, I must not forget to tell you my unfortunate speculation in the shirt line. Just before I left N. Y. I found all my clean shirts but one turn'd into dirty ones. I asked a gentleman I knew where he got his shirts; he recommended me to a crack shirt maker in Maiden Lane. Well, told the man I never had but two shirts that fitted me—Oh! *he* could fit me like a glove, measured my neck &c, put out several sorts,—finally I selected six at \$1.25 apiece [!!] and six or twelve (I forget which) collars. The next morning I thought I would try one on. The first difficulty was to *unbutton* the front, for *it* was buttoned—this I at last got through—then the sleeves and the sides of the shirt were pasted together—yes—pasted together, and I thought I should tear the shirt in getting the parts asunder. After a vast of trouble I got it on, and then—oh dear—the collar was tight enough to hang me, and the bosom part big enough for Captain English, and it hung—no *stood*, on me like a shirt of tin. But the most serious affair was, when I put on my bombazines, you know I had them made very large in the body; after a good deal of crackling and pushing down I got them on, and then was a sight—my body was apparently twice as large as common, and yet it had an unnatural appearance, for the surface did not present the smooth, round, surface, that real flesh and blood produce—but the appearance was corners here, corners there, craggy, mountainous. In fact, I wore it in great misery that day, and if I ever wear any of them again—tell me of it. I really begin to think that you and Mary Anne know how to make shirts and that I

have been too fastidious. Enough of this. I wonder how you are getting on. It grieves me that I cannot possibly hear from you. But be assured that I will hasten on with all possible speed. . . . I must beg of you not to criticize my letters, for I have always written in a hurry and all I have written till this I have written laboring under great indisposition. Now I am thankful to say I am as well as ever I was in my life and regaining my strength every day.

I must say something about Buffalo, the growth of this place far surpasses any place in the west. The location is admirable—right at the head of the lake and mouth of the Niagara River. The view of the noble lake from the street is fine. I have been amazed ever since I left Cincinnati at the rapid improvement of the country in every direction. Especially after you leave Wheeling the whole country seems dotted over with country seats. The farmhouses are built in such good taste, well painted and well kept, fine large barns and outhouses and everything indicating comfort and plenty, and this will especially apply to all the farmhouses between this place and New York. But such miserable poor land! The thought has continually occurred to me if people can live in such comfort and plenty here what might they do in the West. But in all the country through which I have passed I have seen no Carrollton, nor nothing to be compared with it.

At long last, after all the delays, he did reach home, not quite within the month, but by a safe margin. On the morning of September 6, 1845, there came the crowning joy of Joseph Bennet's life. His "lovely Bethania" bore him a son, Charles Bennet, the son Joseph had hoped for all his married life, the "Master Charles" to whom he sent so many kisses in letters written to "Lovely Bethania" the following summer. As I have said, he loved all the little girls, and welcomed each one of them; there is no record or tradition of word of regret or disappointment that his name was apparently to die with him, that there was to be no son upon whom he might lean in later years. And yet, when at long last his son was born to him, his cup was running over. I have never seen his proud announcements written to his family in England and his friends in Cincinnati, but I have seen their responses and know from them that his letters must have been full of joy

and gratitude and renewed zest in the prospect of the years that lay before him. His mind and heart were full of new plans. Life took on new meaning and interest. There was much to be done before young Charles was grown. The baby was hearty and strong and good. That meant he would thrive and soon be big enough to go about with his father. Joseph could scarcely wait for that day. Of course the girls loved playing with him. Joseph Bennet was glad they did, but, after all, Charles was the son of the house and must not be a molly-coddle. His place would early be with his father. He'd love the boats, of course, and the work at the quarry. He did not want the boy hanging around the store much; that was no place for a boy. Of course, Bethania would take care of his early education, but it gave him a pang to think that he might have to send him away later, East maybe, or even to England, for his college training. That was a long way off, however; plenty of time to think of that in days to come.

And so he settled down to advancing his interests and extending his business. The back country was rapidly settling up and there was much travel on the Kentucky River, bringing trade to Prestonville and Carrollton. It was hard to keep the shelves of the general store filled; stone from the quarry was sold before it was loaded on the boats. Everything was going well, and best of all, he carried in his singing heart the knowledge that, as the business grew, there was coming along to share his burdens and his success, his son, Charles Bennet. "My love to you, dearest Bethania, and many, many kisses to Master Charles," he writes in May, 1846, when Master Charles and his mother were visiting in Cheviot. It had been hard to let him go for even a short visit, and yet he was proud to have his old friends see his son, and Bethania needed the rest after the busy times which she had been through.

For, as if the first son wasn't thrill enough for one year in the Bennet family, the first wedding had taken place. Martha, the eldest of the Bennet girls, had been married to young Jamie Crowe, recently come from the Theological School in

Hanover to supply the pulpit of the Presbyterian Church in Carrollton. Though I have no records, I can guess at the activities in the Bennet household preparing for that event. There was Martha's outfit to assemble. The wife of a minister needed good household gear and nice clothes, and Pa Bennet would be the last to stint his eldest daughter. I am sure Cousin Mary sat up nights planning and preparing sewing for the elder sisters to do while she and Bethania did the finest handwork. And what with all the stir and hustle of the wedding preparations, and with all the joyful excitement of having both a bride and a brother in the family, the youngest little girls were like a family of puppies—always in motion and always underfoot. At last, a few short weeks before the wedding, Meggie was allowed to make a visit at the Powells' in Cincinnati. It would mean one less child to think about. Joseph Bennet was going to Cincinnati on business and could take her as he went, and she could come back with the Powells as they came to the wedding. I've always loved the letters Joseph wrote to Bethania about that visit; they tell so much about their writer:

MY DEAREST B—

Meggie and I arrived here safe this morning, . . . But I have serious misfortunes to tell you of—first one of the little Giltners rubbed her buttered fingers on Meg's silk Pelisse—it happened to be the hind part. As soon as I got here, I went into the Ladies' Cabin for Meg's trunk. She said a man came into her room before day-light and said he wanted to put it on the Wharf Boat. She locked it and let him take it. We made every possible enquiry and finally concluded that the fellow had stolen it. And there was Meg—without a bonnet, shawl or any thing left. I was completely confounded as to what course to pursue. In the midst of the hubbub, the second mate came forward and said that a lady went out of that same berth at Lawrenceburgh and he took the trunk out of the same room and left it on the wharf at Lawrenceburgh supposing that it belonged to the Lady above mentioned. I then concluded to send Isaac to Lawrenceburgh, and told him not to return without it, if possible. As the boat did not start till 4 o'clk this afternoon, I left Meg in charge of the

Clerk and the Chambermaid while I hunted a bonnet, shawl and place for her to go to. I thought of Dr. Wood's—I went there and borrowed a bonnet and shawl and took her from the boat and left her with Mrs. Wood to await Isaac's arrival sometime tomorrow. I shall call and see her this evening. This is all I can tell you at present. My hope is that Isaac will find it on the Wharf boat. Give my love to all, and plenty of kisses for Master Charles, I am, Your affectionate husband

JOSEPH BENNET

Poor bewildered little Meg. She was only ten and had little experience or philosophy with which to meet such a series of calamities. The butterfly ruin of her new silk pelisse, the apparent loss of her trunk with all her possessions, and then to have to stay in a strange house with strange people in a strange town while her dear Pa Bennet was trying to recover it, was almost too much to bear. He knew how miserable she must be. It was like him to come back in the evening to comfort her and report progress of the search.

And here is the pleasing sequel which I was almost as glad to hear as I imagine "My Dearest B" was:

I wrote you yesterday afternoon, giving you an account of poor Meg's disaster in losing her trunk, &c. This morning before I was up, Isaac came in with it. He had found it, to my great joy. I had it taken to Dr. Wood's where Meggy will stay till tomorrow, then either myself or Isaac will take her out to Mt. Pleasant. I called and saw Meggy this morning. She is quite well and in high spirits when I told her the trunk had arrived. I am very well, will get home as soon as possible. Give my kind love to all, young and old, and kisses in abundance for Mr. Charles Bennet. Accept of much love from your affectionate husband

JOSEPH BENNET

This short note, with its haste to relieve Bethania's mind over Meg's misfortune, his complete understanding of the little girl herself in such high spirits when relieved of anxiety, and his proud affection for the little son so long in coming, is one to be treasured and enjoyed. The little stepdaughter seemed always a great favorite with him. I think he loved making

her grave black eyes sparkle at his fun. Until she came to his house to live she had never known anything about fun.

Martha was married early in 1846, with her sisters all about her, Master Charles temporarily in the background, and her father looking very proud and handsome as he gave her away, and a little sad, too, to think of the first break in the family circle.

Then, during the coming year the closely knit Bennet family circle was truly shattered. Both Joseph and his little son lay in the Carrollton churchyard. That was more than a century ago. I haven't even a picture of that baby who had meant so much to his father, the Mr. Charles to whom he had sent so many kisses, and yet I can not write of him without grief and bitter protest for the sorrow his death brought to Joseph Bennet's heart. I haven't a word from Joseph's pen at this time, and only family tradition to tell me of the way he bore his grief. The family records of Joseph Bennet stop here. There are no more letters; if there were entries in a diary, I have never seen them.

I know that late in the autumn of 1846 after Charles's death, Joseph Bennet made another, and the last, of his trips to the seaboard to buy goods. He was desperately ill on the way, and when he was only barely able to travel, came home a stricken man. He died in January, 1847, and was buried by the side of the little boy who had preceded him in death by a scant six months.

A story of Joseph Bennet's last journey has come down in the family, unverified by any documentary evidence so far as I know, but not too improbable, considering the man and his times. It is told that on his way East on this last of his customary buying trips, he fell in with an interesting fellow with whom he was soon upon friendly and rather intimate terms. Now Joseph Bennet was no greenhorn. He had made the trip from Carrollton to New York and back many times and knew the pitfalls that lay in wait for the unwary traveler of that day. He knew men of all sorts, and was a good judge of

their qualities, so that under ordinary circumstances it would seem unlikely that he would have become intimate with a stranger, spending hours with him on the river boat and sharing his room in the hotel at Pittsburgh, or wherever it was that they changed to stage or railroad. Ordinarily Joseph Bennet would have been interested in many of his fellow passengers instead of one, and the country and its development would have claimed his attention as it had always done. But the Joseph Bennet making this journey was a stricken man. A short time before he had lost his only son, the son he had hoped for since his first marriage almost twenty years ago, and whose birth less than a year since had seemed to furnish justification of his past and incentive for his future. No casual contacts could draw his attention on this journey. He had things to think about that did not permit casual contacts and small talk. Nor did the countryside hold for him its usual interest. It was an old story by now, so that I doubt if he even saw the river banks as they slipped by. If, however, an apparently sympathetic companion listened to his infrequent comments and joined in his desperate efforts to thrash out some philosophy to support him in his grief, or even merely bore him company in his solitary pacing of the deck, such a fellow traveler might, if unscrupulous, have learned a good deal about Joseph Bennet and his Carrollton circumstances. He was obviously prosperous; if he was going East to buy goods, he probably had cash in hand, in a wallet or belt. He was too preoccupied to gamble, even had he not been too canny a traveler to gamble with strangers; the only way to get his money was to take it. Whatever the circumstances, the family legend says that two men, Joseph Bennet and another, shared a room for a night in Pittsburgh and that, when called in the morning, Joseph was found in a heavy stupor, with his money belt and its contents gone and his recent roommate nowhere to be found. Of course, the assumption made by the landlord and the victim and his family and friends was that he had been drugged and robbed. There is no evidence concern-

ing this calamity. I do not know how much money Joseph Bennet was carrying, whether he had other funds to go on to New York, nor whether he even went to New York. Perhaps, instead, he returned at once to his beloved Bethania and his family.

All I know is the bare final record in the old Bennet Bible: that he died January 7, 1847, after a short illness of pneumonia, not in Carrollton, but in the barely finished stone house on his farm in Prestonville. "The rest is silence."

I wish I could have known Joseph Bennet in the flesh. I should have loved his zest for life, his avid appetite for experience, his ambition, his loving kindness. I think I might even have enjoyed his flares of temper and his quick, harsh speech, followed so promptly by manful repentance, and the warm confessions of his constant love! He had seen a great deal in his forty-seven years: the end of the Georgian era in England, a great growth of liberal ideas—ideas which had completely changed his way of life—a new life in a new country, a successful business career, a satisfying home life and a congenial marriage with a woman of rare quality. I think he would have said that he had had a good life, and enjoyed a gratifying sense of accomplishment. Had he been able to look into the future he might have said he had a good death, too, since he died at the top of his powers, before the fabric of his life had more than begun to fray.

Whether he realized it or not, Joseph Bennet had begun the gradual descent which is the terror of the successful and the vigorous. His business was not so flourishing as he had believed; in extending it, some of his best property had been mortgaged and these mortgages would soon fall due; he had loaned money that had not been collected; he had extended credit to customers who paid slowly, if at all. Given a longer life span, he doubtless would have worried it through; but to worry it through when his magnificent health was impaired, when the son, who would have given zest to the effort, was

gone, this would have called for a struggle he might have been glad to miss.

Life in Joseph Bennet's home had always been run on generous lines. There had apparently been plenty of money, and he spent it freely. When he came with his family to the United States, he had been a rich man with most of his cash in hand. His family had always lived well. I do not know whether his income had begun to shrink long before his death, or whether if it had shrunk Bethania had known about it. Men, in the first half of the nineteenth century did not tell their wives much about their finances, and it is entirely possible that some of his investments might have failed in the hard times following the panic of '37 without Bethania's knowing it. At any rate, at his death Bethania was confronted with an estate consisting almost entirely of mortgaged property and debts to be settled so far as possible, by forced sale. And a family of ten—all girls and women—to be supported some way!

IV

BETHANIA CARRIES ON

BETHANIA'S LIFE SEEMS to have been largely a battle with the adversary. There were two short intervals, a little more than a decade all told, during which she had lived the normal, protected, and domestic life of a woman of her time. Save for those intervals she made her own living and contributed to the livelihood of others by teaching. When Joseph Bennet died and she faced the world with her tremendous responsibility, she was thirty-four years old. I find it illuminating to pause to consider what *I* was like at thirty-four, to remember what my responsibilities were, and in what fashion I bore them!

Bethania had been a widow before. She knew what widowhood meant in terms of loneliness and a changed way of life. She knew something of what it meant in terms of responsibility, for she had been obliged to support herself and her little daughter at the death of George Bishop ten years before. Now she was ten years older and her responsibilities had been multiplied tenfold. She not only had her own three girls to bring up, but an elderly woman to be cared for, and four other young girls to be educated. Of course, these latter were not strictly Bethania's responsibility. They were Joseph's mother and Joseph's children, but I fancy that that thought never entered her mind; it was the Bennet family she was thinking of, not the units composing that family. Martha, the oldest of Joseph's daughters had married, and, at the birth of her first baby, Sarah, the second sister had gone to live with her and share the life in her home, so that the responsibility for two of Joseph Bennet's daughters was off Bethania's mind. Of the others, Mary was fourteen years old, Elizabeth twelve, Fannie ten, and Clara half past eight. Bethania's clear eyes saw that they must now be prepared, not only to assume the ordi-

nary responsibilities of young womanhood, but that they must be able to take care of themselves until the time they should marry.

As soon as the estate was settled, which meant of course the sale of the assets for the benefit of the creditors, the family moved into a little house next door to the church in Carrollton. The church granted her the use of the Sunday school room for a school, and here, starting where she stood, with Cousin Mary at her back, she began to carve out a life for herself and her daughters and the mother Joseph Bennet had left in her care.

Dismaying as the prospect was, Bethania had three weapons against fate. She had friends in the community; she could teach, how well her community knew; and, probably most important of all, she had a loyal coadjutor in Cousin Mary. Without this calm, competent, cheerful woman I am sure even Bethania couldn't have compassed the task before her. But she didn't have to do without her.

At the time of Joseph's death, Cousin Mary had been at the point of marrying Henry Lindsay, long her accepted lover. When she left England, it will be recalled, Henry's beseeching eyes had watched her out of sight, and she had watched his receding figure on the dock, wondering if she would ever see him again. There was an "understanding" between them, but how long could an understanding continue with the ocean lying between them? Mary Anne's parents did not approve of Henry and hoped that separation in space might become separation in fact. That had not happened, and the steady affection upon which that understanding was based had withstood the assaults of both space and time. Five years after the Bennets came to America, Henry followed them, taking a place in Joseph Bennet's general store and becoming a general factotum in all the activities there. When he had established himself and "laid by" a little money, he and his Mary would be married. In the meantime, they saw each other on weekends and holidays; time didn't seem so long now that the end was in sight.

At the time of Joseph Bennet's death the wedding date had been set, Henry's little house was almost finished, and Cousin Mary's simple wedding clothes were ready. But anyone who knew Cousin Mary knew that she would never take her own happiness at the price of the Bennet family's desperate need. Quietly Henry bought in the stock and good will of the Bennet store, setting himself up in business against "the day." Quietly he once again postponed his plans for his home with Mary Anne. As for Mary Anne, she just as quietly put by her plans for the peaceful home with Henry and plunged into the struggle to keep the Bennet family afloat.

The first thing was to move from the easy comfort of the rambling white house on the banks of the river to the cramped little cottage next door to the church. That was a difficult step. After seeing that house, I have never been able to see how she managed to pack the family into it; possibly because there was so little furniture in it. Among my treasured archives is the list sent by the sheriff of Carroll County, Kentucky, to Mrs. Bethania Bennet stating the items she was allowed to keep before the chattels of the late Joseph Bennet were sold at sheriff's sale! A horse and harness, a plough and wagon, two pigs if she planned to set up as a farmer, one-half dozen knives and forks and a dozen spoons, three beds and mattresses, two skillets and an iron pot, a few dishes and a few sticks of furniture; practically nothing when you consider the family to be equipped. But, as I said, one of the resources Bethania had against the wrecking of her life was friends. On the day of the sheriff's sale, they bought and presented to the household enough of the Bennet necessities to make the family comfortable and added enough of their dearly loved luxuries to make life seem not too bare: the silver tea set Joseph had ordered for Bethania on her birthday, the painted tray brought from England, Madame Bennet's silver coffee pot which had survived such vicissitudes, the good china (it must have been good, some of it is good yet)—enough to keep up a sense of the continuity of life for Joseph Bennet's wife, his mother,

and his young daughters. I doubt if Bethania or Cousin Mary ever had time to think about life, or its continuity, busy as they were living it.

I fancy that the first year was largely a bitter struggle to keep the wolf from the Bennet door. At first Bethania's sole object was to keep her school filled, so that her pupils' fees would keep food on the Bennet table and clothes on the Bennets' backs that they might come to school themselves! You see, to Bethania the most pressing duty, after providing sufficient food for her girls, was that of feeding their minds and preparing them for life's business. She hoped her girls would marry, she felt they would be happier so, but whether they married or not, they would live a long time with themselves and must prepare to be good company to themselves and others. Moreover, Bethania was fully awake to the wisdom of preparing girls to take care of themselves economically; her own experience had taught her that. And so, as time went on and the school grew, first Mary, then Meggie "assisted" in teaching the younger girls. There were not many opportunities open to women to earn money in 1850. Teaching was one of them; and if ever young girls were fitted for teaching in those days, they were the Bennet girls, prepared under their mother's tutelage. They had learned their technique in the big family in the little house where each girl had the responsibility for the training of a little one.

In 1850, three years after Joseph Bennet's death, two young half sisters of Bethania's, Alice Georgette and Celia Crocker, came to live with her and her seven daughters and Madame Bennet and Cousin Mary. They were twelve and eight years old respectively, the same ages as Clara and Emma, with whom they found themselves entirely congenial, pairing off immediately into offensive and defensive alliances which lasted through the year. I have often tried to put myself in my grandmother's place in the matter of those girls; to think her thoughts in order to arrive at her conclusions. Here she was, herself hard beset, a widow left to provide for such a

large family. As an organization the family was running smoothly with everyone in good spirits, everyone making her contribution. Clothes were rather shabby sometimes, and occasionally food was scarce, but there was good will and understanding and love. I imagine Bethania gave the matter prayerful consideration before she invited two strange members to join the Bennet family. She would have been so fully justified in saying, "Well, of course I just can't do any more than I am doing. The house is full. I'm not making enough to provide for my own. Grandmother is growing old and must have less work and more quiet, and how can I take on the responsibility for two more lives?" It was only sense to look at the matter so, but that was not the way Bethania looked at things. Instead, in her divine folly, Bethania looked at the matter this way—"Here are two young girls left to come up without a mother, trying to keep a home going without adequate funds or competent direction. They won't have any further schooling; their father—and mine—means well by his family, but at best he doesn't know much about girls." Left in their father's broken home they would never be anything but drudges. She didn't see how she could manage it, but she had never shirked a duty yet, and this looked like a duty. She loved girls, and these were good girls, intelligent and happy hearted. So that was that, and Alice Georgette and black-eyed Celia slipped into their places in the ranks of the Bennet sisters; Mary and Elizabeth, Fannie and Clara, Meggie and Emma, and little Allie.

It was out of the memories of this period that most of my own information has come—I have only the most meager records, but I grew up on the traditions. All day Bethania, the breadwinner, was busy with her school, teaching the growing classes, scouting for new scholars, having conferences with her girls, helping to edit the paper, correcting compositions, preparing her own lessons for next day. At noon she could run home for her frugal dinner with her own girls, a few moments, always, for a quiet chat with Madame Bennet and

consultation with Cousin Mary Anne on ways and means. Frequently it was a discussion of ways, means being practically nonexistent. But Bethania could always go back to the afternoon session secure in the confidence that Cousin Mary would have something on the table for supper, and, whatever it was, it would be good. The evening for Bethania meant sewing, companionship with her girls, admonition, maybe discipline; a general check-up of the household organization and, if she were lucky and not too exhausted, study and reading for her own development after the others were abed.

I keep saying to myself, Didn't she have any fun? Was life nothing but duty? How could she bear it? Was life worth living? No one can answer that question for another. The answer is too bound up with temperament and background and a scale of values. That which makes life most valuable to me, Bethania had only in scanty measure. But I'm sure she never questioned life's value. In the first place, her religious conviction would not have allowed her to question it, or her strong sense of duty to live it as well as she could. I think she knew nothing much about fun; she was serious by nature, and Puritan by training, so that her few pleasures were grave. Her great joy and her richest reward lay in the love and affection of all who knew her throughout her useful life—her family, her pupils, her friends. How she could be so grave, so serious, so duty bound, without repelling youth I cannot imagine, but instead of repelling, she drew youth, always. Her daughters and stepdaughters and the half-grown stepsisters adored her, and the hosts of those she taught rose up to call her blessed. Her life had great rewards; but still I wish she had had more fun, more play time in her childhood, more leisure in her late years when she had become so tired.

Cousin Mary, now arduous as her life had always been, had fun out of the things that came her way. She took her responsibilities seriously enough, but she met them not only with courage but with high spirits. "Here is a great game," she seemed to say, "where you are pitted against a wily and

merciless adversary; you have to win, and to do so, it behooves you to outwit him. If you do, you are entitled to your triumphant laugh." She enjoyed the battle, and she dearly loved her laugh. I don't suppose she really loved all the heavy labor of being chief hewer of wood and drawer of water for the Bennet cohorts. I'm sure outwitting the wolf on the Bennet doorstep was often a sad and heavy business, but I'm equally sure that she got a real pleasure from the exercise of her wits in each case, and a joke on the adversary was worth a hearty laugh. "That for you, Mr. Wolf, and a pleasant good-day!"

The first years after my grandfather's death must have challenged the high spirits of Cousin Mary. In addition to being chief of the service of supply, she was guardian and nurse to the children. Emma and Alice were six and four that first year, and seemed to find a good deal of mischief to get into. Emma, who was my mother, was usually referred to in the family tradition as "that limb of Satan," a somewhat inexact term with a perfectly definite meaning. From all accounts and her own confessions, the regimen of the household was considerably complicated by her high spirits and her reluctance to conform to the somewhat stern Bennet rule. She realized its necessity, but hated many of its requirements. She hated going for a walk with her sisters, two and two, like a procession; she hated bread and milk for supper; she hated dusting, though she didn't mind "doing dishes" because someone always "did" them with her and they could always talk and play games; and she did hate wearing hand-me-downs. Being well toward the end of the line, she had few new clothes, having to take her turn at the dresses of her elder sisters as they were outgrown and passed down. Cousin Mary did wonders in making over and turning, but even her capable fingers could not make a really new dress out of an old one. Ma Bennet planned that each girl should have a "best" and "everyday" for winter, and a "best" and "a change of everyday" for summer, but Emma's best was apt to be a bit thin by the time

it got to her, and even fresh aprons could not hide the fact that her "everydays" were often faded and torn. I can't bear even to record the cruel game invented by one of her school-mates for the express purpose of revealing the sleazy state of her school dress; it sent her home one day to Cousin Mary in tears and tatters after a rage in which she kicked and scratched and even bit her tormentor. I am glad to record that when the case was referred to the court of last resort, Bethania was wise enough and just enough to know that what was needed to restore her little girl's self-respect was a brand new dress, wangled some way from the budget and made in Cousin Mary's best manner. I have no doubt that Ma Bennet exacted from her violent child proper apologies to the defaced adversary; but my mother had no memory of that, only of Bethania's hearing the evidence and of the loving, understanding comprehension of the misery in her child's heart that caused the explosion. I asked my mother once if she had not felt that in some way that new dress was a reward or a triumph, but she said that Bethania made very clear her error in reverting to brute force, a descent unworthy of an enlightened Bennet which was to be considered and regretted, but not to be repeated. And the dress! Well, she had to have a dress to wear to school, didn't she?

Puritan that she was, Ma Bennet always knew the value of nice clothes; Joseph Bennet would have taught her that if she had not known it before. All the pictures I have of her show her narrow collars of fine lace, her dresses of silk that would stand alone, no doubt. I have the lace barbe she wore as a cap, and I have seen a half dozen of the exquisitely made nightcaps that, in her day, no lady went to bed without. Fine nainsook they were, made by hand with the tiniest stitches. When the Bennet girls were married, Bethania saw that each had an adequate outfit, as generous as the family exchequer could afford. Martha's had been the first wedding in the family, in 1846. Joseph was still alive and had been even more interested than Bethania in seeing that his daughter's

outfit was not only adequate, but generous. Marrying a minister, as she was, her position was semipublic, and he did not want his daughter going to her husband insufficiently equipped! Martha was a pretty little thing, and he liked to see her in pretty clothes.

For nearly ten years Bethania continued her school for young ladies in Carrollton, beginning with her own girls as a nucleus and soon gathering around her the daughters of her neighbors, men and women not content with the meager schooling available to girls in the Kentucky of that day. I know very little about the school in Carrollton. Since her own girls ranged from seven to fourteen when she began, she probably taught a great many classes. The two youngest might not have been in the schoolroom for the first year or two, pursuing their educational way at home under the skillful instruction and discipline of Cousin Mary. My mother was one of these. She did not enjoy it, although she admitted that Cousin Mary, if anyone, would have interested her in what we now call domestic science. I fancy the Carrollton School for Young Ladies followed closely the method and curriculum of the school that my grandmother, as Mrs. Bishop, had conducted there some years before: "The English branches, Geography with use of the globes, History and Chronology, Natural Philosophy with the use of apparatus." I know that great stress was laid on composition. The students issued a little paper every so often, written by hand in beautiful Spencerian script, filled with dissertations on various subjects, signed by the authors, and corrected for matter and manner by Ma Bennet, herself. "My Wants," "Enterprise," "Education for Women," "Habit is Second Nature," were some of the titles, and though these efforts may seem crude, they were the means of developing in Ma Bennet's students a certain ease and accuracy of writing and an ability in discussion that was unusual in that day. School papers are an ordinary matter in every school today, but they were rare in 1850. As a means to self-government they were only less unheard of

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HENRY LINDSAY



COUSIN MARY ROLFE LINDSAY

than self-government itself as an educational policy. In most schools policy was announced full formulated in unequivocal terms by the management, to be accepted willy-nilly by the students. Ma Bennet's method of evolving a code through discussion, by tongue and pen, was new indeed.

But let us return to the chronicle of the Bennets. The great accomplishment of the first years after Joseph's death was the organization of the family on its new basis and the establishment of the school. The pattern of the family life changed little after that. The school prospered; the Bennet girls grew up; three years after her son's death, Madame Bennet was gathered to her fathers at the ripe age of ninety. By the close of the school year in 1856 Bethania felt she might give up active teaching and let someone else carry on the school. She was tired to the bone; she and Cousin Mary had virtually accomplished what ten years ago they had set out to do. They had trained and educated Joseph Bennet's elder daughters to be self-reliant, independent women; they had made comfortable and happy the last days of his aged mother. Now Bethania could manage to finish the job of the education of her own three daughters and the young half-sisters, the Crocker girls. She would miss the help and companionship of the loyal woman who had stood shoulder to shoulder with her for so long, but it wasn't fair to Cousin Mary to postpone further her own life. There was no one in the Bennet family who did not know that she was postponing her own life, although she probably never referred to it. And there was Henry—"Enerray Lindsay," as she always called him. Five years after she sailed away from London leaving him forlornly waving after her boat, he had followed her to Kentucky to make his fortune and to marry her, when she could get around to it. She had seemed so necessary to the varying fortunes of the Bennet family, however, that she never seemed able to manage it. When he first came, Clara was a delicate baby whom she would trust to no one's hands but her own; when Bethania came into the family bringing her little girl,

followed so soon and so regularly by hers and Joseph's three children, Cousin Mary saw no time when she could be spared to assume new duties of her own. Certainly, after the cataclysm of Joseph Bennet's death, she never even considered any course other than battling to keep the Bennet family afloat. Now, however, even her own conscientious devotion absolved her of any further "duty" to the girls, so that she and Henry, at long last, were married and went to live in Prestonville, where Henry by now conducted a general store—boots and shoes and beans and nails and calico and molasses and axe handles and whiskey and all the fascinating miscellany of the country store of the '50's.

A short time after the wedding, Bethania, with the Lindsay's help, moved from the brick cottage in Carrollton to a comfortable little house in Hanover where she expected to rest while planning her next step. She hadn't made up her mind; she had been doing a little writing for church papers, she would like to continue that; she had finished with formal teaching, but she might do some tutoring for the college boys; she even had some idea that she and the girls might take some students to board. She never had a chance to think again of any of these ideas, for the night after she had moved in, her house and all its contents burned to the ground. I don't know anything about the circumstances or the immediate results; whether there was any insurance or where the family lived after the fire. There are vague references, which I cannot verify, that they went for refuge to the unoccupied house on what had been their farm in Prestonville. It doesn't seem likely to me, although, of course, Henry Lindsay and Cousin Mary lived in Prestonville and might have made temporary arrangements for the stricken family.

A singularly sad sidelight to this tragedy was that the fire destroyed Mary Bennet's trousseau. Mary was shortly to become the bride of William Le Master and move to a new house on the Le Master plantation "Homewood," out of Memphis. Bethania had striven to send Joseph's third daughter to her

new Southern home supplied with proper wedding finery. All winter Mary and her sisters and Cousin Mary spent their evenings putting tiny stitches into fine fabrics. The neatly stitched garments and daintily hemmed table linen, the sheets and pillow slips, were packed away with lavender in their folds to await the day of Mary's wedding when she would exchange the busy restricted life in the Bennet family for the leisurely plantation life. Then all these loving efforts went up in smoke and flame.

The wedding took place as scheduled, and Mary left the family circle. But sadness stalked her course. Her husband had never been strong enough to take up the ministry to which he had been ordained, and though he managed "Homewood," even that was possible only because his father and his brother shared the burdens during the Civil War. Will and his family then (there were two children by that time) moved into the big house on the plantation where Will died soon after. His widow and their children, his brother and his brother's family, lived in the big house for many years during the misery of the aftermath of the War and the Reconstruction. I hate to think of that misery, although I wish that I knew some of the tales about it that Mary Bennet Le Master told my mother and that we children heeded so little.

Bethania looked upon the calamity of the fire as a sign from Heaven that she was not to give up teaching, that teaching was definitely her mission and her duty; she had been "called" to teach and she "covenanted" there and then to heed that call. Comment by the child of a materialistic and a scientific age is uncalled for. Bethania was of another age and of another training; many times in her life she followed a leading to a successful end. Who am I to decide whether she was superstitious, or a mystic, or the possessor of a sixth sense? At any rate, she resumed what she considered to be her mission. She had no equipment to establish a new school, nor funds to acquire it, but while she was considering ways and means, she was approached by the trustees of Waveland Col-

legiate Institute at Waveland, Indiana, with an offer of a position as assistant principal.

The Waveland Collegiate Institute was a Presbyterian Academy, which had recently become a co-educational school. It was a tempting offer for one whose most vivid interest was the education of women. The Bennets hated to leave Hanover. What family of young women would not hate to leave a pleasant college town filled with pleasant young men? Many compensations were to be found in Waveland, however. Waveland Collegiate Institute was really a feeder for Wabash College, at Crawfordsville, and Wabash students were much in evidence on the Waveland campus. Moreover, though I think boys and girls were not in the same classes in the academy, their associations in the little community were free and simple and they came to know each other under the pleasantest circumstances. I often wonder that the Bennet sisters, with their very restricted knowledge of boys and men in their family life and early school days, did not go "haywire" in these impressionable years. The only men they had had any way of knowing were the Butlers, Henry Lindsay, who in their eyes was a mere appendage to Cousin Mary, and their brother-in-law, Jamie Crowe. But in some way they seemed to meet this change in the pattern of their lives sanely enough—more sanely than many a modern freshman adjusts to her first year in a co-educational college. They were pretty! (I have daguerreotypes to prove it.) They were full of fun and nonsense, some of them were flirtatious (I have family stories and packages of letters to prove that), but, all in all, so far as I can discover, all those boys failed to turn their heads. They had some love affairs, but they were at the age for love affairs. They spent a good deal of time going back and forth to Crawfordsville, but then Jamie and Martha were living in Crawfordsville and the parsonage was a natural rendezvous for the Bennet girls and the Wabash students who might chance to drop in. They were sympathetic with the members of the Greek letter Beta Theta Pi Society, existing *sub rosa* at that time. They went

so far in their sympathy that they offered them the use of Charlotte Elizabeth Hall in the academy for their secret meetings. But Ma Bennet had said they might, and consented later to the regular initiation of Emma and her cousin Celia into the order.* Alice and Emma were students in the Academy during the first year of Bethania's residence. Emma joined the teaching force when Meggie Bishop married, taking over her music classes, to the entire satisfaction of all concerned. (I have the paisley shawl with the scarlet center that she bought with her first earnings—a gay rebellious flag flung to the memory of all the hand-me-downs of her little girlhood.) Soon Elizabeth Bennet was teaching in the Waveland Institute, and after 1860, Clara joined the ranks.

Waveland proved a good place for the Bennet fortune. Ma Bennet loved teaching both boys and girls; she enjoyed the companionship of her fellow teachers and the occasional contacts with Wabash professors. As for the girls, of course they liked it; Elizabeth, Fannie, and Clara met their future husbands there. Elizabeth married Edwin Rhoades and lived in the peaceful town the rest of her life. Clara became engaged to David Patton when he went off to the Civil War from his classes in the academy; she taught there until he came back to be married. Fannie married Edwin Hill—a Crawfordsville boy.

If the Bennets were like the girls I know best, I'll venture they hated it when, in 1863, after seven years in Waveland, Bethania was called to Oxford Female College. This institution was the outgrowth of the little Oxford School for Young Ladies which she, herself, had established thirty-three years before. In the intervening years it had grown and developed and then declined, until now it was almost without students, although possessed of an excellent plant. It would take hard work to pull it out of the slough into which it had

* See "An Initiation at Waveland," by Karl W. Fischer, in *Beta Lore* . . . by Francis W. Shephardson (George Banta Publishing Co., Menasha, Wis., 1928), pp. 88-89.

fallen, and, as I say, she hated to leave Waveland. But here was a call to the cause she had long made her own, the higher education of women, and of course she answered it. It was Bethania's association with Oxford Female College which most closely links her name with the far-flung system of academies, those institutions which played so important a part in the history of American education, nowhere more important than in the Middle West.

Bethania's letters and journals over this period have never come to hand. I only know that at the end of the first year of her second period at Oxford there were a hundred students instead of the twenty she found there at the beginning. Knowing her educational methods, I am very certain her first step was to bury deep the little pamphlet I found among her papers, entitled "System of Government of Oxford Female College." I think she must have smiled when she read it, realizing that here, probably, lay the chief reason for the falling off of patronage. Herein were sternly stated "Duties of Teachers," "Duties of Pupils," and "General Rules"—forty-four of them, covering the fields of morals, manners, religion and conduct!

No. 1 of "Duties of Pupils" is staggering—"Each pupil must rise at five. She may rise at four, but not earlier."

No. 3 read, "Each young lady must put her room in order before 6 o'clock," and No. 4, "After chamber work has been done in the morning, no young lady must sweep her room into the hall."

Rules 14 and 15 indicate a certain modern frailty in the girl of the late fifties: "No one is allowed to eat anything in study hours"; and "No one must be idle during study hours."

What to do? What to do? With Miami College students in the same town, there must necessarily be rules to cover this situation. Here they are! No. 22, "Brothers staying in the other college [Miami] will be permitted to see their sisters on Saturdays only, and then for an hour." [Don't push, brothers, don't crowd.] "The same will be allowed to cousins once a month, only." And No. 23 unequivocally states, "Other gentle-

men are not permitted to call upon young ladies at any time." And as for Sunday—"No young lady is allowed to visit any other lady's room on the Sabbath," and 30, "No pupil is allowed to attend to any of the studies of the week, or write letters on the Sabbath." There was no escape, either, for even if you could get away from it all now and then, No. 31 stated definitely, "No pupil is allowed to travel on the Sabbath, in going home or returning to college."

Of course, if there are rules, there must be penalties. "Penalties" began, encouragingly, "The highest penalties which the unfaithful student has to fear, are the stings of conscience and the displeasure of God." But in case the recording angel should slip up: "The standing of pupils will be kept in a permanent register; and marks of disgrace once recorded, will never be erased."!! Penalty No. 7 looks like a rule from the Inquisition rather than from a school for gently bred girls: "Pupils are required to report daily, any violations, known to them, by others, when such violations are not reported by the offending pupil; but the individual is not required to give the name of the offender." And as if this were not enough to give Christian education a black eye, there follow six pages of "Advisory Rules"—on which the young ladies were not marked, but which might not "be useless to members of the college." I can't believe the compilers of these advisory rules could have thought they would even be read, much less acted upon. Wishful thinking, maybe, and a flight from reality, certainly. "I will study with intense application on mathematics from five until seven." No wonder they all hated mathematics! "From seven until nine I will devote to breakfast and active cheerful exercise in the open air, preparing for useful labor. I will not indulge in fictitious reading, either in books or papers, fearing to drown my love and knowledge of truth in a sea of falsehood." And that, my dears, would be something deplorable. Lest they become soft, "I will study about half my time standing, and I will restrain my appetite for food and drink in kind and quantity, placing intellectual

above animal gratifications." None too sanguinely the compiler of these rules slips the following in for the conduct of life, "I will endeavor to love my enemies."

No wonder the attendance had dropped to twenty! It took a hardy soul to undertake a regimen like that, and, after all, girls will be girls, as no one knew better than Bethania.

I wish I had a catalogue or some other documentary evidence, or even family gossip, concerning that year at Oxford, but alas, I have not. I do not even know whether George Bishop's family still lived there or whether Bethania renewed her contacts with them. I only know that from a successful period at Oxford she was called to do a similar piece of rehabilitation at Cooper Seminary in Dayton, Ohio. Here again was a church school practically gone dry for lack of students, and yet deemed by the church to have a field of usefulness. Bethania, feeling that Dayton was her next work, took with her five of her teachers from Oxford. At the opening term over twenty of her pupils from Oxford followed her, bringing a number of their friends.

From Dayton she was called back to Waveland. She returned with a comfortable feeling of settling into an accustomed and possibly permanent niche. But it didn't last; in less than a year a family emergency called her to Greencastle, Indiana.

Greencastle was the site of Asbury College. The town while striving for a high cultural standard had really done nothing about its young women. Co-education was in the air; the trustees of the college were thinking about admitting girls to college classes and eventually granting them degrees, but in their eyes the time was not yet. They had to talk about co-education for a long time before they did anything about it. Most of the Greencastle girls were not interested in going to college, but they and their parents did want a seminary where they could continue their studies in "the higher branches" and where those who wanted to go to college could prepare for entrance. The mothers and fathers, impressed by Bethania's

gentle dignity, her social charm, her very evident intellectual attainments, realized what her influence would be upon her pupils and promised their patronage, should she organize a school. And when September came around there she was with "Mrs. Bennet's School For Young Ladies," ready for business next door to the college, her daughters, a Miss Morrison, and herself as backers. The records of the school are lost and my knowledge of it is mainly traditional, but it was only a few years ago that I met in Greencastle two or three elderly women who told me happily that they had been "primaries" in Ma Bennet's school. "She was a wonderful woman—I've never forgotten her," they said.

Bethania's next move was occasioned by the necessity of taking Emma to a cold dry climate for her health. Bethania, who could teach one place as well as another, closed her school in Greencastle and began planning for another in Minneapolis where she could continue her profession while giving Emma the care and companionship she needed. Also her seminary in Greencastle, while doing well enough, would never do much better, for Asbury College would admit women in the fall, and that would take many of her upper class girls.

For some months at this time, Bethania had been in correspondence with the authorities of Vassar College, then just getting under way. They were assembling a faculty and she had applied, with high recommendations, for a position on that faculty. References in her correspondence indicate that she was elected to such a position for the year 1869-70, but I have no document stating definitely that fact. However that might be, nothing ever came of such a project; she had a project and a duty nearer home, for by the autumn of 1869 she and her daughter, Margaret Bishop Milligan, now a widow, were preparing to open "Bennet's Seminary for Young Women" in Minneapolis.

Now teaching was an old story to Bethania Bennet; she had been at it most of her life, beginning as a girl of fourteen. In the course of that experience, she had been a part of almost

every sort of school then functioning in America. She had begun at fourteen in a small home school in Massachusetts, sharing her limited knowledge with her contemporaries who knew less than she; she followed this with her little school for young ladies at Oxford; in her first widowhood she organized and taught a similar school—an institution which she herself assembled and financed and administered. If you had a teacher like Mark Hopkins or Mary Lyon or my grandmother on one end of the proverbial log, you had, I am convinced, one of the best of schools, although, of course, it took an immense toll of the vitality of its head. It was this type of school that Bethania had in Carrollton and in Greencastle; to all intents and purposes she was the school. In her connection with the Waveland Collegiate Institute and in her later service in Oxford Female College and Cooper Seminary in Dayton, she had been an *employed member* of a *faculty* and so relieved of all financial duties. The proposed Bennet Seminary in Minneapolis was to be organized on a different basis from any of these, for while Bethania and Margaret both put money into it, the school was to have its substantial plant financed in part by Minneapolis businessmen, forming a directorate with a hand in all matters concerning the school.

Minneapolis was young then, not very far removed from frontier days. There was a good deal of money there, and families who were dissatisfied with the educational facilities were both willing and able to pay for good schooling for their daughters. A seminary building was bought, a third teacher was employed, and in the autumn of 1869 "Bennet Seminary for Young Ladies, Bethania Bennet, President, Margaret Bishop Milligan, Principal," opened for business. It was a good school from the beginning and served a useful purpose for years.

There is always something to be said for making a complete change in one's circumstances, and this had been a very successful change for all concerned. Emma had apparently made a complete recovery; Bethania found herself among de-

lightful friends, with pleasant church privileges, and an interesting school where she was relieved of harassing financial responsibilities. For the widowed Meggie the change had been especially beneficial. She became principal of the Bennet Seminary and later married a Minneapolis widower. Emma also married in Minneapolis, but her husband was a Greencastle boy, Jerome Allen, and they returned to Greencastle to make their home.

After Emma's happy marriage, Ma Bennet had no further immediate anxiety. Every one of her girls had now entered upon her own happy and useful life. Twenty-five years before she had promised Joseph Bennet's memory that she would see each one prepared for life, and now the work was done. And just in time, too, for her to do what she wanted with extending the usefulness of Bennet Seminary. She wanted not only to enlarge its scope but make it much better, and it was due mainly to her vision and her efforts that it served a useful purpose for many years after Bethania Bennet had taught her last class.

In 1876 Bethania admitted she was tired and hoped, if she could arrange it, "to take a year off to rest and lead a normal woman's life." "Neither Meggie nor myself wish to quit teaching at present. We do not think it would be right. If I can put someone in my place as regards teaching and Margaret retain her position as Principal, I shall then feel that I can be away most of next year.

"It would be so very pleasant to live for a year like other people. Nothing to hurry me, not tied to a bell rope—to be able to sit down and read a book without feeling that essays are to be corrected, some lessons looked at or some abstruse principle made clear to some dull intellect."

This letter was in response to one from her daughter Alice, begging her to give up teaching and come live with her and her husband, Albert Allen. She couldn't manage that year of longed-for rest, but she did take a long summer vacation, going first to the Centennial Exposition in Philadelphia and later coming

to Greencastle to talk it all over with her daughters. She went back to teaching in September, declaring she was fully rested and so inspired by all she had seen at the Centennial that she could hardly wait to pass it on to her girls.

In January, 1877, she had a stroke, and whether she could "arrange it" or not, her teaching days were over. When able to travel, she was taken to Greencastle where she died in Alice's home on May 7.

Of course, in my dim childhood memories, Bethania was always an old lady. My last gift from her was a toy rolling pin, brought from the Centennial Exposition. I remember wondering, every time I played with it, how a grave elderly person like my grandmother ever *knew* how enchanted a little girl would be with a miniature tool which not only looked like the real thing, but worked like it. I know now; she might have been a grave elderly person, but she knew most things about girls—little and big. Her life had been spent in learning about them and loving them.

V

THEIR LEGACY

JOSEPH BENNET'S WORK is gone, and any material fruits thereof went within a few months after he had closed his eager eyes upon the world that had so greatly interested him. Strangely enough, the only material legacy left to speak to posterity of this ardent, vital, cultured gentleman is a silver service, a beautifully engrossed book of themes, a copybook of sorts, a gold seal he had worn on his watch chain, a diamond stick pin, the journal of his journey to America in 1837, a small memorandum book filled with entries showing his growing interest in America, and, by no means least, the glowing, delightful letters from which I have drawn this all-too-meager portrait to set beside the painted one I've loved for years. So far as I know, this is all he left—all but the blood stream which runs through our veins, the germ plasm which has helped determine our stature and our relations, the color of our eyes and what we see when we look out of them, our ductless glands and the way they function.

Important as this material and physical legacy is, Joseph Bennet left us quite as much in intangibles. That we received practically intact that inheritance was due to Bethania and her appreciation of its value to all of Joseph Bennet's children and particularly to their own children, hers and his. It was Bethania who kept alive the traditions he held important, Bethania who kept vivid the picture of their father as the loving center of family life; it was she who reminded the girls how he came home early from his business to play with them the games they all enjoyed; it was Bethania who impressed upon them how he loved everything American, including the food and how he insisted they eat all of every American dish served to them; it was Bethania who probably reinforced the young Emma's impressions that much as he might desire a

son, no girl in his family came unwelcomed. Without Bethania and his unrestrained letters to her, we might never have known how much of enthusiasm and zest and curiosity and love of life he gave us by setting the pattern of a life which he himself followed.

Implicit faith in and complete submission to a Divine Will were plainly the fundamentals of both Joseph's and Bethania's lives. Neither was meek nor supine; on the contrary they both had great initiative and to a marked degree thought their own thoughts, but they quite literally walked with God and very definitely relied for direction upon a personal deity who watched over them and ordered their uprisings and down sittings. No one who wants to know what Joseph and Bethania were like can consider lightly the part that religion and piety played in their lives and in the legacy they left to their children and their children's children.

I might write a chapter discussing this point to little profit; certain Bennets would regret that I was destroying the fair image of the beauty of my forebears' holiness, and others would be equally certain that I was bound by a superstition, the same superstition that ruled them all the days of their lives; and yet, all the time, I would be trying only to tell you that as recorded in their letters, their diaries, by the testimony of their contemporaries, those who worked with them and for them, here were two individuals of varying attainments, both endowed with a high courage and a love of life, both intelligent, both vastly interested in matters of the mind and spirit, one of them, at least, loving the good things of the flesh, both loving their respective tasks and responsibilities, and both having enough frailties and shortcomings to be

"not too rare and good
for human nature's daily food."

Joseph Bennet had lived forty years before he and Bethania joined their lives, and Bethania had the long pull alone for thirty years after he died. I fancy both of them considered

as the heart and core of their lives the seven years spent together in the joint enterprise of the Bennet family. In point of time, it was short, but in point of importance and accomplishment, it was supreme. In it lay the crown of their respective pasts, and from it flowed Bethania's future.

VI

COUSIN MARY

IT IS FITTING enough that after both Joseph and Bethania, the main actors in the Bennet story, had been gathered to their fathers, there should remain one who, standing upon a high hill, and looking both ways, could see it all in true perspective. She had stood in that center and core of life with them, giving her loyalty and her divine common sense to their task of uniting their diverse pasts into a harmonious present, helping make the necessary adjustments between his children and her child, so that in time there might be a harmonious family background for their children to come. I am convinced that even Bethania and Joseph couldn't have done that without Cousin Mary. I am doubly sure that from that heart and core of life Bethania never could have gone on without her. Cousin Mary had stood on the top of the hill after she and Joseph had gotten the family up there; she had dwelt with them on that pleasant hilltop; and she had made possible Bethania's lonely trip down into the valley with Joseph Bennet's children and her own.

What sights those bright eyes had seen!

When in 1856 Cousin Mary married Henry Lindsay and went to live with him in Prestonville, I'm sure she closed the eventful chapter of life with the Bennets with mingled relief and regret. For twenty years she had thought and planned in terms of the Bennet family, of their comfort, their well being, their happiness, their progress, what they should eat and what they should drink, and wherewithal they should be clothed. Now, at long last, she was to take thought of the Lindsay family, herself and Henry, who had stood by all these years loyally and devotedly. She could hardly imagine what life would be like; she would miss the girls and all their to-do, but how she would love the quiet of her little house. It would

be like a playhouse with just Henry and herself sitting down to meals, and no one to get things out of order, once the cottage was put to rights. Cooking for two would take no time; the sewing would be light; she herself never needed much and the sewing for a man was just nothing after the tucks and ruffles and embroidery for all those women. Making a man's shirt again after all those years of women's clothes would be a treat, with the buttonholes to make in the evenings while Henry read to her out of the novels of Mr. Dickens.

For Henry was fair wallowing in domesticity, the domesticity he had been denied for so long being his at last. I have a picture of Henry Lindsay taken shortly after his arrival in America [see, facing p. 79] which to me is symbolic of his life and spirit during those years until his dream came true. It is the picture of the little man, seated firmly on a wooden chair exactly in the center of the stage; behind him a stark, dark-featured background on which he had resolutely turned his back; here was no simulated sky or landscape, no looped draperies, no scenic marble columns, just blank background which he disregarded, as he had disregarded the blank and lonely years in England now behind him. His wooden chair was merely a place to sit, the tiled floor, palpably oilcloth, nothing more than a spot on which to plant firmly his square-toed boots, as if he said, "This is plain and not very interesting, but it will do for the present. I don't need a Gothic chair nor a Brussels carpet. I shan't be here long." The figure itself, which is the entire picture, is that of an Englishman straight out of a novel of Dickens', a spare middle-aged man with a domed forehead, whiskers under his chin, and appealing eyes looking straight ahead at that future so long envisaged and so long unfulfilled, so richly worth waiting for, those expectant eyes seem to say. The inscription on the back is a perfect title, exact, complete: "Henry Lindsay 1843." I wish I had one entitled "Henry Lindsay, 1856," with Cousin Mary in the door of the cottage that Henry had waiting for her in Prestonville when he married her, and in the back-

ground, the general store that Henry found it hard to attend to properly, now that Cousin Mary was in the cottage. Two or three times a day he must run home to see if she was really there. "Well, Mary Anne!" he would say happily, and "Well, 'En-erry!" she responded, as she often had done before. And when he closed the store at evening, as early as he decently could, he and Mary Anne ate their simple supper and sat down to read *David Copperfield* and talk about the England Mr. Dickens wrote about so entertainingly and that they knew so well. They enjoyed talking about it, but neither had any wish to go back to it.

Many summer evenings they walked about the town to greet their friends and admire their gardens and inspect the new houses going up. Henry was interested in houses and in the architecture of public buildings when in a city where he could see them. One of the interesting things that has come down to me about him is the way he looked at buildings, back to, and bent to look through his spread legs as a painter often looks at a painting. He explained, gravely, that this was the only way to see mass and scale in their proper relation in a building, and he might have been right—I don't know.

I have no records of any details of their life in Prestonville, nor if they ever visited the Bennets in Waveland. In the late fifties Martha and Jamie Crowe moved to Crawfordsville, and their home became the rendezvous for the elder Bennet girls from that time forward. Elizabeth was married there and I am sure Cousin Mary must have had a hand in the wedding preparations and have been a guest at the festivities. Wherever Clara, her own particular child, was married, I'm sure she was there; Cousin Mary being what she was, I am sure nothing could have kept her away from that occasion. When Clara was settled and established in her home in Remington in the early seventies, Henry sold his store in Prestonville and he and Cousin Mary came to Remington to live. They had lived frugally and saved their money. Whether they were able to buy another little store in Remington, or whether they

lived on their small investment, or whether, as I suspect, they were the guests of Clara Bennet Patton and her husband, I don't know. I do know that after Henry's death, Cousin Mary lived in the home of her adored Clara until her death many years later.

It was during those years that I knew and loved her. Her annual visits were high spots in my childhood's year, more important than Christmas because, while they were quite as enriching and equally surprising, they lasted longer. She was a figure out of a different world. She was even a different figure made out of different material, apparently, and by a different pattern, certainly, from the grown-ups that we knew best, soft where they were hard, and having none of the protuberances of the mode then in vogue for the well-dressed woman of that time.

Of course we loved her, partly for purely material reasons, for the good things she made for us to eat, and the beautiful handmade clothes concocted from Mother's old polonaise or Father's cast-off coat. We loved her, too, for the amazingly lifelike stuffed animals she made for us out of scraps of cloth—elephants and mice and camels and cats, shaped with a skill acquired in all those years of contriving and cutting and sewing for the Bennet girls. All those things we loved; but we loved her most for the stories she told us, stories which opened windows for us into a different and a wider world than any we had known before. When she told us of London, it was a real place. We knew how it looked and how it smelled and how it clattered. When she talked of Carrollton, we saw the shadowed Kentucky hills and the slow-moving Ohio River at the foot of the Bennet garden. Some way, too, we felt the nipping cold of the Kentucky morning and our fingers ached in sympathy as she told about getting breakfast in the kitchen when you saw your breath in the frosty air. Or, if it was summer in which she set the scene of her story, we stewed in the steamy breath of the river. But all that was background, and the tales she told merely events set against a background.

The real thing she was giving us was a glimpse of life outside our narrow orbit, something richer than anything we knew. She was no mean poet, and performed well the poet's task, for, possibly without intention, she made manifest to us, even as children, that the heart of that life she told about was not circumstance or event, but the spirit embodied therein, a spirit in whose fire had been fused all those diverse elements which in the end became the Bennet family.



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